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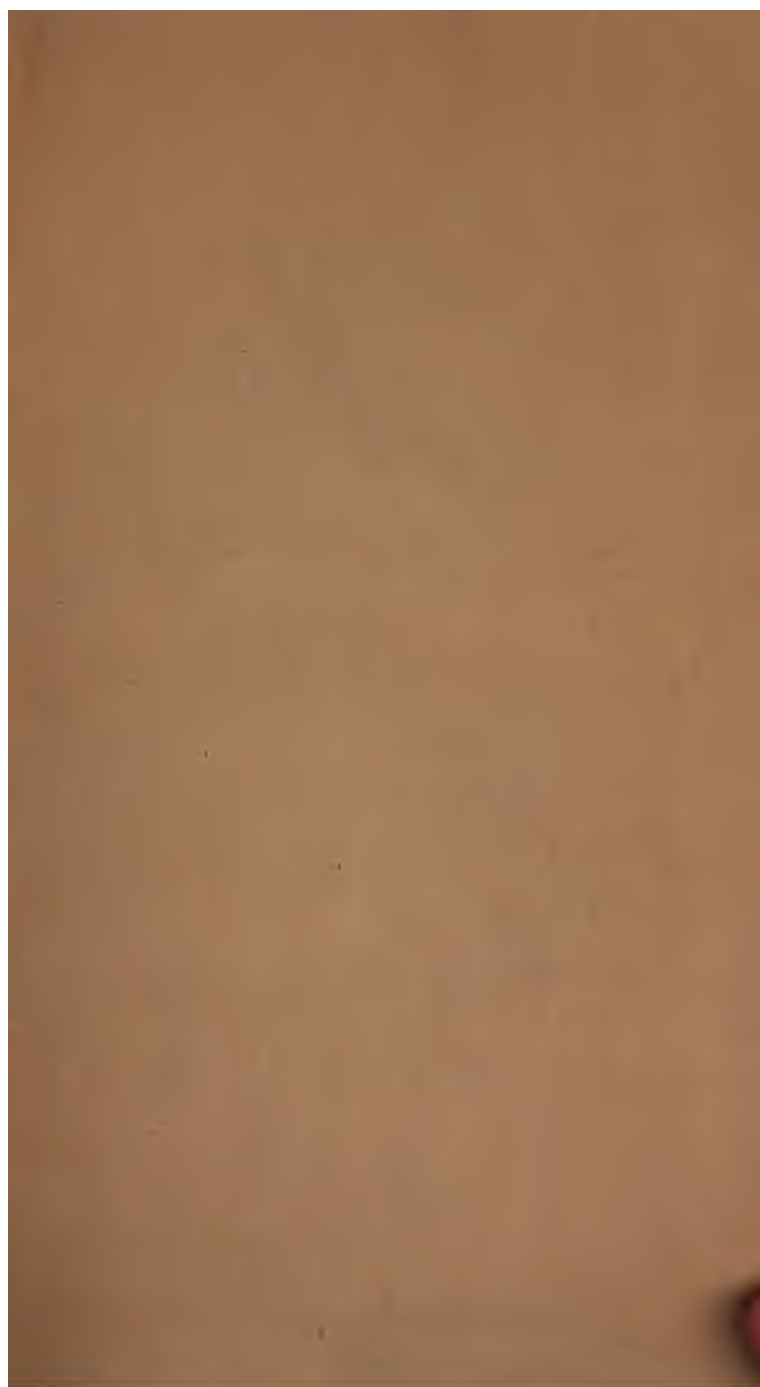
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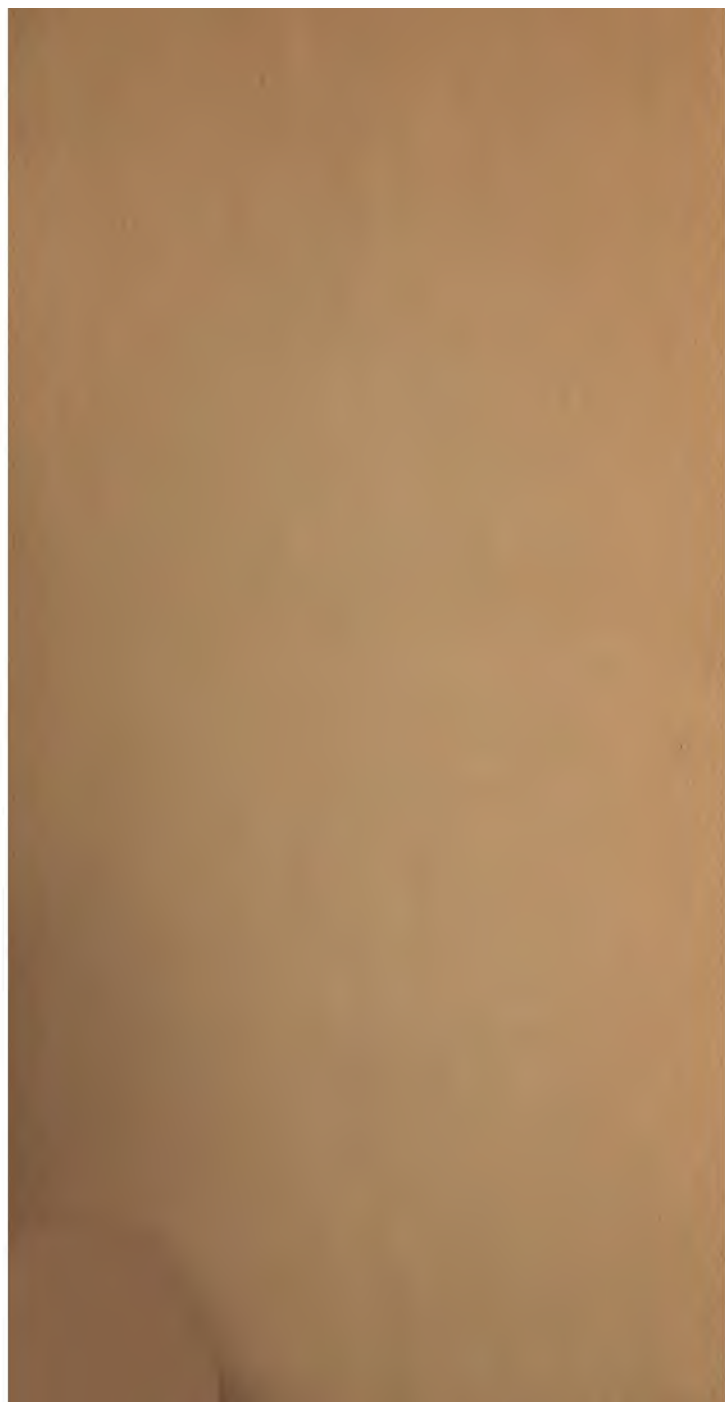
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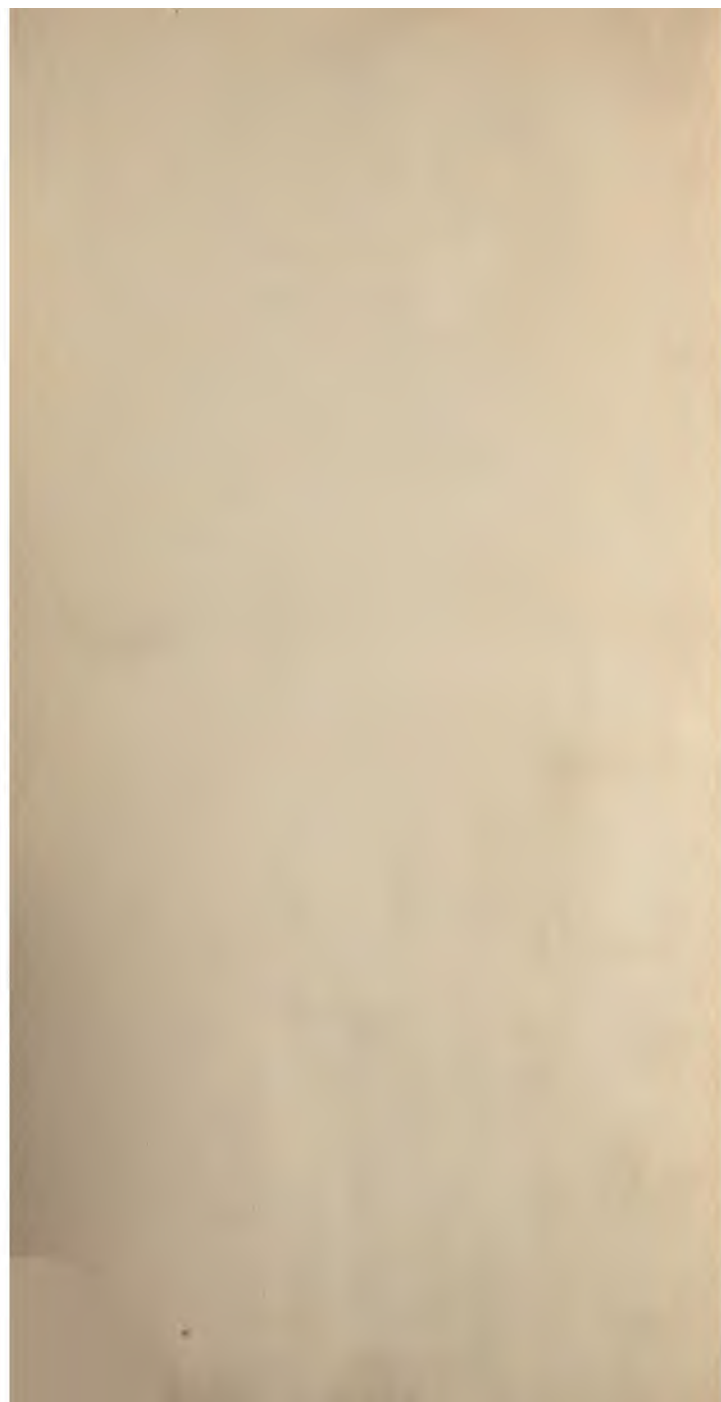
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**CONFESSIONS**  
**OF A**  
**FRENCH CATHOLIC PRIEST.**

**TO WHICH ARE ADDED**  
**WARNINGS**  
**TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.**  
**BY THE SAME AUTHOR.**

**EDITED BY**  
**SAMUEL F. B. MORSE, A. M.**  
**PROFESSOR, &C. &C, IN THE UNIVERSITY OF THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.**

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" American liberty can be destroyed only by the Popish Clergy."—*Lafayette*

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

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THIS work, the production of a French gentleman now in this country, who was but lately a Roman Catholic priest, has been put into my hands by him for revision and publication. It cannot fail at this time of being deeply interesting. Some parts, indeed, are of the greatest political importance, for they add to the proofs of a systematic design in Europe to create a strong Popish party in this country; for what purpose, it is not difficult to conjecture. The alarm which has been sounded of foreign conspiracy, it will be seen by some further evidence adduced in that part of the work entitled, "Warnings to the American People," is neither without foundation, nor premature. Whatever opinion some may form as to the character of this *modern crusade*, whether they consider it rational or quixotic, whether harmless or dangerous, the fact of the existence of such a crusade cannot admit of a doubt. The testimony is here given of one who was but lately in the enemy's camp, and was designed by that enemy

to act a prominent part as a priest, at a future day in this country, to be employed in extending Popery.

The "Confessions" possess all the absorbing interest of a romance, with this additional advantage, that they are graphically true. The personal narrative most beautifully illustrates the consequences upon a truly conscientious heart of that most unnatural vow of celibacy enjoined by the Popish canons. It is impossible to peruse the details of the author's internal conflict, without also arousing, (along with the indignation at the infernal system which arrogates the power of imposing the unnatural vow,) pity, the deepest pity, for the deluded men who are its victims. This narrative, instead of creating or fostering personal animosity against the priests indiscriminately of the Roman Catholic faith, I think must have the effect on every feeling mind which I confess it has on my own, that of inducing great care lest, (in that just indignation, which is more than ever felt to be just, against Popery, and in the uncompromising warfare, political and religious, which is to be waged against it,) injustice be done to some honestly deluded priests like our author; for there are many others, doubtless, in the ranks of Popery, who are there only from education, deceived by the great sorceress; and who rather deserve our compassion and our benevolent efforts to undeceive them,

than our blame and denunciation.\* Still it must be granted, that in our own country, where the sources of knowledge are so freely open to all, where all political impediments are removed from the conscience, where there are no restraints upon it but those self-imposed and voluntarily submitted to, there is less excuse, (if, indeed, there is any, but that of the grossest ignorance and an obliquity of intellectual vision amounting almost to idiocy,) for any Roman priest who would zealously propagate the monstrous absurdities, and the darkening and debasing superstitions of Popery, in this land of intellectual light and freedom. *Knaves* or *dupes* are the only names that can be applied to zealous Papists, in this country at least, if not throughout the world. For the *knaves*, charity, the broadest charity towards the whole human race, demands that they, like other knaves, should be exposed, and put under the ban of enlightened public opinion; while the *dupes*, (and dupes they are, however repugnant the name may be to their self-love,) should be treated with the tenderness, and pity, and benevolent efforts at recovery, due to all *honest* delusion. But whatever course of forbearance may be pursued towards the persons of the deluded, their error, alike fatal to our religious

\* NOTE. See chapter XIV.

and civil institutions, must be fearlessly exposed and perseveringly resisted.

The question will naturally be asked, "*Why does the author conceal his name?*" Reasons of prudence in consulting the safety of dear relatives, all Catholics in the south part of France, where they are surrounded by a bigoted, enslaved, and most vindictive Roman Catholic population, (as any one acquainted with the state of that part of France well knows,) oblige the considerate and truly amiable author to preserve for the present a strict incognito. His friends would suffer on his account the most painful proscription. Little do we conceive the dangers and trials, the hate and persecutions which in our own times await not merely the *convert* himself from Popery in countries where it is dominant, but which pursue even the innocent relatives of the apostate heretic as he is called, although they remain staunch in their attachment to their sect. Would they who inconsiderately affirm that Popery has changed its persecuting character in modern times, but give a moderate share of attention in ascertaining the facts which are every day occurring to prove its true spirit, they would no longer be deceived, but watch with the greater jealousy all the movements and encroachments of this necessarily intolerant sect.\*

\* The following decree of Pope Innocent III. and the fourth General Council of Lateran, is in full force, and is acted out in spirit

The public may rest assured that the author is what he professes to be. He is no fictitious character. He is personally known, not alone to me, but to several gentlemen, whose names and standing are well known to the community. His testimonials which he showed me are of the highest character ; and he was, when in France, under the patronage of a French nobleman distinguished for his liberality

and letter now, this very year, in France and Italy :—" We excommunicate and anathematize every heresy extolling itself against this holy orthodox Catholic faith ; condemning *all heretics*, by whatsoever names they may be called. [i. e. all Protestants.] Moreover, we decree that the *believers, receivers, defenders, and favourers* of heretics shall be excommunicated ; finally decreeing, that after any such is noted by excommunication, if he refuse to satisfy within a year, he shall from thenceforth be *ipso jure infamous*, and may not be admitted to public offices or councils, or to the choice of such, nor to bear witness ; and he shall be intestate, and not have power to make a will, nor may come to a succession of inheritance ; and no man shall be forced to answer him in any cause, but he shall be forced to answer others, &c. If he be a notary or register, the instruments made by him shall be utterly void, and damned with the damned author. And so in like other cases we command that it be observed." It is further commanded, that " the bishops, or archdeacons, or other fit persons, search *once or twice a year* every parish where any heretic is found to dwell ; and put all the neighbourhood to their oaths whether they know of any heretic there, or any private meetings, or any that in life and manners do differ from the common conversation of the faithful."

This is still the decree of the Church of Rome, and in full force as I have said, in the south of France, in Italy, and Spain, at this hour. That his brothers and sisters may escape the persecutions of this intolerant decree as *receivers, defenders, and favourers* of their heretic brother, the author for the present is compelled to flee his country and to conceal his name.

and philanthropy, whose name is associated in Paris with plans of the most enlarged benevolence, whose time and immense wealth are freely employed in the encouragement of industry, religion, and literature among the French people; but whose name, for reasons obvious to all, cannot now be given to the public.

It may be proper here to state, that the author, while writing his "Warnings," was ignorant that alarm to any great extent had been sounded on the subject of the Foreign Conspiracy. He had neither seen the book with that title, nor was he aware that the people in all parts of the country were so much awake to the subject. He was urged to the task, it seems, by his own knowledge, while in France, of the reality of such a plot; and in the spirit of a generous philanthropy, felt himself compelled to warn us of its existence. The author's Warnings, therefore, are *coincident*; they are fervent and powerful; and being a voice from across the water, they deserve, on this account also, to be heeded. If they shall have any effect in dispelling remaining doubt on the substantial reality of a crusade against the liberties of the United States, it will not be the first service that the land of Lafayette has rendered to the cause of American liberty. The declaration of Lafayette, which the author has placed as a motto in

the title-page of his book,\* is a beautiful evidence of the sagacity and vigilance of Liberty's great friend. Lafayette, like a veteran mariner, was ever watching the political horizon for the indications of danger to his beloved America, and the danger to which his latest warnings pointed was this very covert political attack, which is in full operation upon our soil at this moment; an attack the more dangerous because it shields itself under the mask of religion, and cries out persecution at every attempt to expose its true, its *political* character.

If in that part of the Warnings in which the author apostrophises the clergy of his former faith he seems to use words strongly impassioned, let it be remembered that it is from one of the order, who knows by experience the character of the class whom

\* It may not be amiss here to state, that the declaration of Lafayette in the motto in question was repeated by him to more than one American. The very last interview which I had with Lafayette on the morning of my departure from Paris, full of his usual concern for America, he made use of the same warning; and in a letter which I received from him but a few days after at Havre, he alludes to the whole subject, with the hope expressed that I would make known the real state of things in Europe to my countrymen; at the same time charging it upon me as a sacred duty as an American, to acquaint them with the fears which were entertained by the friends of republican liberty, in regard to our country. If I have laboured with any success to arouse the attention of my countrymen to the dangers foreseen by Lafayette, I owe it in a great degree to having acted in conformity to his often repeated injunctions.

he so eloquently portrays, for he himself was a priest ; and let it be also remembered, that his charges are not new, but that they are most amply sustained by authentic history.

The account which he gives of the direct and active agency of the Roman Catholic priesthood in the despotic usurpations which produced the late French Revolution of 1830, and of the way in which these politico-religionists use their spiritual power for political purposes, will not be lost on the American people. It is full of instruction ; and the modes of influencing elections, which the priests adopt in France, correspond with facts already multiplying on this side of the Atlantic. There is an identity of modes ; nor can it be doubted, when we remember who are the great movers of the wires, that there is also an identity of object, namely, the DESTRUCTION OF LIBERTY.

SAMUEL F. B. MORSE.

*New-York University, Oct. 1836,*

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CONFESSIONS  
OF A  
FRENCH CATHOLIC PRIEST.

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CHAPTER I.

*Introduction—True manner of judging Popery—Its two doctrines, the one secret, the other public—The appearances and the reality—Theatrical pantomime—Necessity of exposing Popery.*

POPERY disfiguring the Gospel by its superstitions, and enveloping it with falsehoods, has metamorphosed it, as a miserable painter who should daub with his colours a breathing statue of Phidias. Like such a painter, Popery has defaced the masterpiece of God, and has substituted its own criminal inventions for the heavenly Revelation ; it has transformed this pure source of blessings for mankind into an impure pool, the exhalations from which have poisoned men, and desolated the face of the earth. In gazing at this profanation of the very work of God, at this criminal substitution of human conceits for the divine institution, who can restrain his indignation ?

But it is not the lot of every man to penetrate into the bosom of this "mystery of iniquity," to analyse its reasons, to explain its causes. As for me, who (for nearly my whole life, believing the tenets of Popery to be the true Words of God himself, the only revelation of Christ,) have laboured to propagate it most conscientiously as the true religion, it has been my duty, in my blindness and ignorance, to study to know this astonishing priestly creation, the falsity of which I discovered only when I compared it with the true Gospel. Since I have been unhappy enough to be a teacher of error, a supporter of lies, while breathing only for truth; since I have been a channel of those corrupted and corrupting waters, I thought, besides other reasons, it was my duty as a man, a Christian, and a *Priest*, as some atonement for my fatal errors, to reveal this immense iniquity. As the former Christians of Egypt, who at the peril of their life penetrated into the temples of idolatry, searched in the bosom of a gloomy sanctuary for the pretended Divinity offered by the Priesthood to the worship of a deceived people, and carried to the light instead of the God, some horrible monster; so I will try to draw from its darkness the idol of Popery, and, showing it to mankind, I will cry with all the strength of my voice: "There is the Divinity you worship."

Yes, Popery has caused the Work of God to disappear, and in its place has presented *itself* to the adoration of the world. But it was too cunning to invent indifferent or empty superstitions. There is not one of them—

look at all the Roman institutions from its chief tenets, *the real presence of God in the Eucharist, or the infallibility of the Church, down to the holy water and the wax taper*, and there is not one of them which is not either a means of grasping *money or power*, or of entrapping the *female sex*.

This is, if I mistake not, the best manner to judge of Popery, to prevent its encroachments; because, as soon as it is known in its true nature, no honest and enlightened man can be prevented from blushing at its monstrous doctrine. It is sufficient for truth, in order that it may be embraced, to be shown to its lovers: so it is sufficient to show falsehood and deceptions, to make them detested.

Hitherto, perhaps, Protestants have occupied themselves too much in discussions with Roman Catholics upon the falsity of their religion. Roman Catholics are divided into two classes, learned and ignorant. The former know better than any body else the immorality and the absurdity of their faith; but it is their living, their income, their trade; consequently it is as useless to prove it to them, as to prove to a pickpocket that he steals money which is not his own. You will succeed much better in exclaiming aloud, and pointing out the robber to society by the cry of "stop thief." You will have annoyed him, and have done greater service, than by a useless discussion with him. Thus, for the ignorant Roman Catholics, who believe without examination and reflection: and for Protestants themselves, who might become Roman Catholics, it is enough and better to say, in

showing them the true nature of each Popish practice, "This religion that you believe to be the revelation of God, this religion that you are disposed to embrace, is but a means of getting your money, your liberty, your wives and daughters." *I know it*; no other manner of attack is more fatal to Popery than this. The reason is clear enough, for, like all the religions of antiquity, Romanism has two doctrines—the public or apparent, and the secret or concealed: the former is for the common people or dupes, the latter is for the initiated or the knaves, who know well that if the dupes could learn the whole truth, they would despise and detest their absurd belief. Catholic priests, like those of Isis and Osiris in Egypt, of Cybele and Ceres at Rome, of the Dolai-domas in Thibet, fear nothing more than the revelation of those mysteries, and of what passes in those gloomy abodes so carefully shut from profane eyes.

For example, let us ask of Popery who instituted the belief of the *real presence* of God in the wafer? He will answer, Christ himself, when he said in the last supper, "*hoc est corpus meum*"—"this is my body."

Popery knows well the falsity of this answer; but, in accordance with this its creed, it has established *Mass*, which produces immense sums of money to the whole priesthood.

Why has Popery established *purgatory*?

In appearance, to the ignorant, it is founded upon Holy Scripture; and Popery answers, "I alone give the manner of avoiding its awful fires."

But in reality, it is one of the best supports of its power, because priests are the only channel through which people can succour souls in purgatory, and it is not at all founded on Scriptures.

Why has Popery established *indulgences* ?

In appearance, it is a means of atoning for one's sins, diminishing one's punishment in the next world.

But in reality, it is to coin money from the sins of men, and to sell, at high prices, what is worth nothing.

Why has Popery established *auricular confession* ?

In appearance, it says it has been established by Christ himself to efface sins, to purify the conscience and reconcile to God. But in reality, it is to rule the conscience of each person, rich and poor, great and small.

Why has Popery said that the *confessor* was the *representative of God* ; that his advice is *divine* advice, his decision, *divine* decision ?

In appearance, that he might have more power to rule in a good way, and impress the minds of his penitents the stronger with virtue ; and besides, he asserts that confession is founded upon the Bible.

But in reality, it is that the confessor might be all powerful on the minds of his penitents, turn them at his will for the execution of his wicked designs or the satisfaction of his lust.

Why is so deep the *secrecy* of confession ?

In appearance, because it is a continual miracle of God, who prevents it from being revealed.

But in reality, the revelations, few in number it is true,

are carefully concealed to make people believe that "the finger of God is here," and the ignorant or *duped* priests themselves believe this firmly.

Why has Popery obliged its priests and monks to take the "three great *vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity*?"

In appearance, because priests are more perfect than other people.

But in reality, the vow of obedience is required that they might become the slaves of their superiors; and the other two vows that they might, under this hypocritical veil, indulge freely and with less suspicion in the contrary passions, covetousness and lasciviousness.\*

Why has Popery especially instituted the *celibacy* of its priests, a *particular garb* for them, particular *customs and manners*?

In appearance, because they are of a superior race, almost heavenly beings.

But in reality, they wish to get rid of the embarrassments of marriage, that they may live without control with every woman they can get. They wish to strike the senses of the people by their garb and customs, to persuade them by these external appearances that they are of a superior nature.

Why has Popery instituted those thousand *corporal mortifications*?

In appearance, to show a great aversion to earthly pleasures, and a special desire after perfection.

\* Is it not a remarkable fact, that the Roman clergy engages itself by a vow to the practice of these two virtues, while it is more *immure* and *vicious* than any other class of men?

But in reality, to have an occasion of *selling dispensations* to many people who have neither courage nor desire to practice mortifications.

Why has Popery established those intimate relations between saints and men upon the earth, through *relics, images, adorations*, and a thousand other superstitions ?

In appearance, to help us in the great work of our salvation.

But in reality, to place itself as an intermediate between saints and men, and to *sell their intercession* : to make money with all these practices and beliefs, and root more deeply its power in each mind.

Why has Popery said that *learning* was the great *enemy of the faith*, interdicted under so severe pains the reading of so many useful books ?

In appearance, because Popery is very careful of the salvation of souls endangered by these books.

But in reality, because its superstitions and deceptions would be discovered by this reading, and it would lose its followers.

Why has Popery, above all, shut the *Holy Bible* from the people ?

In appearance, because there are passages above common understandings and dangerous to the ignorant.

But in reality, because its alterations of this sacred book would be disclosed.

Why has Popery burnt *Heretics* of all denominations whatever ?

In appearance, to save their souls, to keep pure the word of God.

But in reality, to *get rid of*\* those who ceased to obey its commands, to bear its yoke ; and to impress a solitary fear on the Catholic world.

Why does Popery *condemn* to hell all the *followers of other religions* ?

In appearance, because it is itself the only true religion of God, and others but errors and lies.

But in reality, to retain in its chains, or to drag into them timid and ignorant people, the greatest part of mankind.

Why has Popery scattered its *missionaries, monks, friars, nuns* of every description, upon the face of the earth ?

In appearance, because Catholics are more zealous of their own and others' salvation.

But in reality, to spread in every direction, through the preaching of Jesuits and others, the yoke of Rome : to make an immense net-work with a thousand meshes to entangle mankind ; to hold it by this net, every thread of which meets at Rome in the hands of the Pope.

Why has Popery proclaimed so loudly its *infallibility* ?

In appearance, according to the words of Christ himself.

But in reality, that nobody may revolt against its decisions and ordinances ; that Catholics may receive every command as an order of God, of whom the Pope is the vicegerent. That he may trample upon the necks

\* Baxter quaintly but most forcibly says, " There is nothing like *stone dead* with a Papist ;" it is the most conclusive of all arguments.

of people and kings ; crush the former, depose the latter, and make both the tools of his purposes.

Why has the Pope declared *himself, his priests and monks, sacred persons*, whom no one can injure without a horrible crime, whatever the provocation may be ?

In appearance, because they are men of God, "*the Lord's anointed.*"

But in reality, that they may execute all their cruel and tyrannical designs without any man's daring to oppose them.

It is thus that every thing, every institution in Popery, has its double face, like "that column of fire which led the Hebrews in the wilderness, which was darkness to the Egyptians but brightness for Israel." It is necessary to have been in the camp of this "new people of God" to know them, and to appreciate their secrets.

Popery, by a sacrilegious profanation, has added to, and mixed with, the revelation and Gospel itself, its own inventions and creations ; decisions of Rome, of councils, of popes, of theology, making a whole under the name of Revelation, and has offered it to the adoration of mankind. In this manner this guilty assemblage of sacred and profane, of truth and lies, of divine and human doctrines, becomes a species of ark, which no one dares to lay his hand upon for fear of suffering the fate of Uzza : and Popery, in the height of its presumption, has proclaimed, as its most essential lesson, that the decision of the Pope is of so great weight, that the Bible itself, among Catholics, is nothing without it is consecrated or ratified by the Holy See.

Nothing is more true than that the Roman Church is a pantomime, a theatrical play, comedy or tragedy, played by knaves or dupes to cheat mankind ; a vast stage, from which we must tear the veil that we may learn the true character of its actors.

Cicero has said somewhere in one of his philosophical works, of the priests of his time, that they could not look at each other without laughing. A thousand times I have seen myself the same spectacle, after our ceremonies, among my former fellow-priests when congratulating themselves on their success. But had they been human beings, ought they not to have wept for such a guilty deception and its cruel result ?

The three great reproaches that mankind have to address to Popery, are, for having produced *corruption*, *darkness*, and *slavery*—three plagues perfectly bound together and supporting each other. If I do not mistake, the first has been the source of the other two, and has been itself produced by the vicious celibacy of Roman priests ; for, once fallen into corruption, the *natural result* of this immoral institution, it became the interest of the Roman clergy to enslave and darken mankind, that, being blind and enslaved, they could neither revolt against the priests nor see their crimes. Their conduct is precisely like that of a little sea-fish, which scatters a black liquor round it to trouble the water and conceal itself from its pursuers.

Consequently my chief aim will be to tear away this thick veil under which the priesthood is hid, to clear

those *troubled waters* in which it hides itself from the eyes of men, giving itself up to the most unbounded excesses. The *celibacy* of priests, this root of all vices, is represented by the impudent Church of Rome as its glory, its honour, its best title to the admiration of the people, because its priests, not being married, appear "as angels." To this assertion I answer, that I have myself been a Catholic priest, seeing openly many hundreds of my fellow-ministers ; and I have also had intercourse, through my ecclesiastical functions, with people of every description, of every class and species ; and I affirm before God, who will judge me, that there is not any class in society so vicious, (with but few exceptions in it,) as the Roman clergy. Ordinarily, the only virtue I discovered among my brethren is an hypocritical cunning above all conception, which imposes upon the eyes of the multitude, and makes them, in appearance, great saints.

I say "with but few exceptions," and these are the *dupes* or the *victims* of their fidelity to their vow. I will show my readers a young man deceived by his teachers, influenced by their doctrines, and prevailed upon by their cunning to become a priest, and to take this impious vow of celibacy. I will show him, thus condemned to celibacy, and dealing through his ministry every hour with young females, become involuntarily, in spite of himself, enamoured with one of his penitents. I will show him faithful to his vow, never revealing his love to any one, not even to the object of it, but while he was in France crushing it secretly in his bosom, cursing his folly ; and

at length, when compelled to fly his own country, carrying with him his misery and his unrevealed secret. This unhappy and misled priest is myself; and if I feel bound to expose, for the benefit of my fellow-creatures, the faults and foolishness I made in following and preaching the Gospel faith, perhaps I shall be allowed to tell the *evil that I have not made*. I will paint myself such as Catholicism has made me, with all my feebleness and my errors without disguising any thing. I will show with impartiality how Popery makes all evil, and spoils and debases the spirits and bodies of men. I will show what I have suffered, both from the forced intimate relation with the other sex at confession, and from efforts to throw off the whole burthen of my superstitions. Then, analyzing the principal practices and doctrines of Popery, I will point out their true source. I will represent the clergy as I knew them. I will tell only what I *saw with my own eyes or heard with my own ears*. *My only regret is that I cannot tell all that I saw and heard.*

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## CHAPTER II.

*A Catholic Seminary—Its interior, studies, ignorance—I am entrapped by my Confessor—My repugnance to the Priesthood vanquished—My blind piety—Mortifications—Fanaticism.*

I WAS born towards the end of the last century. The early death of my parents left me to the care of one of

my uncles. The good man deemed it best to destine me, a poor orphan, to the ecclesiastic state in the Catholic Church. May God have pity on his soul; for he perhaps intended my happiness, and he could not foresee that in doing so he made me the unhappiest man in the world: he could not foresee that he put me in a position in which I was tempted to curse my fate, myself, and the authors of my own existence.

According to this design, he brought me up in a house managed by Catholic priests, in order to inure me to their customs and manner of life; after the usual course of studies, at eighteen years of age I was confined in a seminary. A seminary in the Romish Church is a species of institution quite unknown to the Protestants, and an idea of which it is not easy to obtain.

The young men here cloistered, are, for three or four, often five years, shut out from human intercourse, without any liberty, liable to the hardest discipline; above all, to the fatal influence of their superiors, whose continual instructions cramp their genius and degrade their mind. From morning till night they speak of the necessity of mortifying the flesh, of taming the body, of destroying the "old Adam," the "old man." Such is the great ground of all the Catholic virtues; such is their doctrine renewed from, and taught by Manes, the most romantic of all the impostors; which degrades man below beasts, or elevates him sometimes above humanity. This doctrine has produced the heroes and monsters of Popery.

Fastings, bad food, mortification, long meditations in

the morning, at noon, and evening ; confession of sins every week, and much oftener ; habit of a slavish submission to the most ludicrous practices ; the study of a ridiculous theology ; the idea which those ignorant young men receive of God, of his severity or rather cruelty, of the duties of a priest, of his eternal chastity, the hardness of discipline ; all that, and many other practices which I loathe to recall, is so well mixed, directed, managed, that the pupils become stupid, fanatic, slavish, and quite like clay in the hands of a potter. All the tenets of the Romish religion then enters their minds at full sail, “ en masse ;” and how long a time is necessary to get rid of them, how many fights in the soul, and how few have the courage of discharging this awful task ! There, not one book is allowed to be read but theology and the works of blind piety. Every discussion against Popery is so severely forbidden, that he who reads any, incurs excommunication “ ipso facto.” Therefore the students are unaware of the doctrines of other religions, and of the charges which they lay against Popery, save that our teachers repeat that the followers of other Churches are damned, because they shut their eyes to the light, and they remain out of the pale of the true Church.

When the time of ordination has come, which is always after days of severe fasting, long sermons, &c., the confessors reiterate their endeavours and make use of their authority, to get us into their profession ; and with

their thousand means of influence, they turn at their will our weakened and darkened minds.

As for me, owing to their lessons, I conceived so high an idea of the Catholic priesthood, that I was frightened at taking my first step, doubtless through a warning of heaven. In this awful and for ever unhappy occasion, my fear of this terrible profession, as it is represented by our superiors, was so great, that I went to my confessor and I told him my desire to recede. He was a very cunning man, zealous for his religion, in great reputation among us all for his apparent piety (which we were too blind to judge of correctly,) and for his decisions, which were always received as coming down from heaven itself.

He listened to me with an indifferent coolness, although I saw his disappointment; he having relied upon me to be in the future a *column* of the Holy Church.

"Well," said he to me, "you renounce the ecclesiastical profession?" "Yes, sir," answered I, "I do not dare, I do not feel myself virtuous enough, I am unworthy of this sacred vocation. Pray erase my name from the list of *ordinants*." "Willingly, sir," replied he coolly; "but at the same time it will be erased from the list of saints, and from heaven. The very moment you let go your vocation, you lose your soul and the grace of God. You are a lost man." In my simplicity I listened as to a divine oracle; my blood froze in my veins: it seemed to me that hell was present before me, yawning to devour me. "O God," I cried in a pitiful tone, "be merciful to

me ! thou knowest that my whole desire is to do thy will. Inspire me with what I ought to do." And I wept bitterly. My holy director took advantage of my sad situation ; " My dear boy," said he to me, " you have always looked to me as to your father, and you have never repented yourself of it. Trust to me yet in this hour ; follow my advice, and you are saved. If I misdirect you, I, not you, shall be accountable for this fault in the eyes of God ; your eternity is in your hands ; happy forever if you listen to the voice of heaven which speaks to you through my mouth ; unhappy forever, if you are obstinate."

My mind was strongly impressed with this chief thought—that the greatest crime of a young aspirant to the priesthood, was to direct himself. Consequently, overpowered, and yielding to this impression, I answered him, " Let, then, the will of God be done." Hereupon he caught me in his arms, he kissed me with great demonstrations of friendship, and said to me, " You will be the glory of religion ; you have talents, you will save a great many souls. Be blessed. You will be a holy priest." So, in my simplicity I made this step which sealed my misfortunes.

Born with a fiery quick temper, the vivacity of the inhabitants of the south of France, an extraordinary degree of sensibility, and very social dispositions, I was fitted for no one situation less than for the celibacy of the Romish Church. However, as soon as I thought it was the will of God, I made my best to fulfil my duty ;

and I endeavoured in earnest, while in the seminary, to become able to perform my future ministry. In the beginning, through the effort of my susceptible imagination, all was sweet and consolatory. God with all his mysteries, Popery with its tenets, were all for me. I threw myself in the immensity of God as a bird loses itself in the fields of the air, as a fish in the immensity of the ocean. All which Augustin, Jerome, Bernard, Theresia, Fénelon, have written on God, I devoured eagerly. I understood marvellously well the abstraction, the penance, and the mortifications of the saints: my whole regret was at not being able to follow them. According to our instructions, my body became my foe, and I endeavoured continually to reduce it to subjection. This thought, "life is but a perpetual fight," was always present to my mind; and if it happened that I found some piece of virtue, some example of mortification which I had not been strong enough to practise, I chided myself bitterly. "Why," I asked myself, "why dost thou not do what such an one has done; he was a man like thyself?" And my conscience was quiet only when I had copied what at first had excited my just repugnance.

The necessity of eating (which, said our lessons, put us on a level with beasts,) humbled me very much; and although the cookery of the seminary was by no means a temptation to gluttony, but rather a perpetual lent, I never went to the eating-room without groaning internally, for fear of strengthening my body against my spirit. Thus, in those moments especially, poisoning

all the most natural enjoyment imparted by God to his creatures, I entertained the saddest thoughts. I chided myself by saying that I did not deserve the bread I ate. "How many," I repeated with a great Catholic saint, "would make use of it much better than I? O God, when wilt thou deliver me from this body of death?" I did not take a mouthful without grudging it. Therefore, with what pleasure did I deprive myself of any thing which was good in my portion, and which I left in my plate that it might be divided among the poor. I thought that this privation was of use to Jesus Christ in the person of the poor, who came after the meal to share the remainder; and this alms, the matter of which was taken out of my own subsistence, seemed to me to have a double efficacy. The *charity* at first, and afterwards the *mortification*; for I left the table half-satisfied.

It was for this holy hatred to my body, that during three whole years in the seminary I renounced totally the use of fire; and I was always, from five in the morning till nine in the evening, shivering with cold, which many times prevented me from sleeping. In every circumstance I endeavoured to crucify human nature, to substitute for it the "man of God." I endeavoured to root out earthly feelings, and to fill myself with heavenly. In short, I thought it possible, and I tried to become an *angel*. Sometimes it happened, that after having long applied myself to these meditations, my imagination became warm, and I felt a species of ecstasy or rapture, of which the saints,

and above all, the female saints, speak frequently. This state, I must avow it, was full of sweetness and delight; and I blessed God for this signal favour. There passed not in the whole day a half hour without my heart sparkling with divine love, without my mind turning towards heaven to think of God. My heart and my mind seemed to me a magnet, which ought naturally to be directed towards God.

It was, above all, in my frequent communions, that I experienced those unspeakable ecstasies of happiness, the fruit of a highly excited imagination. There, animated by the most ardent faith, I saw, if I may so speak, the God with whom I was to unite myself, and it is above human tongue to say, to describe, my delighted transports. When I awoke with this thought—"to-day I shall receive the communion," my heart palpitated, my bosom swelled with love; I was in a state quite supernatural. However, it is true I never experienced the state of Saint Louis de Gonzague and of Ollier, whose hearts became sometimes so burning that it was necessary to water their breasts with copious sprinklings. In reading their lives, I envied this ardent love, but I could never raise myself to such a height.

The study of theology, such as it was in our seminary, was for me a hard punishment. My natural love of the truth could not accommodate itself to so many mental reservations, distinctions, equivocations, which are indeed but so many disguised lies. Moreover, disgusted by the filthiness of some treatises, I did not proceed so

fast as my former progress in study might have given hopes of my doing. Theological laurels never tempted me; for I was so disengaged from the earth and human honours, that I answered wrong purposely, in a public examination, that I might get some humiliation.

On the contrary, the reading of the Bible delighted me. Indeed, my spirit was too enslaved to discover that our teachers did not always agree with it, because I was prepossessed with this idea—that only the Romish Church is able to explain the Bible. But I could not be sated in reading those delightful pages; I learned a great deal by heart, and the whole time that I was not forced to give to other occupations, was for my beloved study. I have not the least doubt but that I owe my conversion to this reading.

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### CHAPTER III.

*I leave the Seminary—I am sent as a vicar to a city—My disposition—The old priest—His prediction and avowal—My vow becomes heavy—My uneasiness—The Protestant minister—My relations with him—A quotation from Luther.*

I HAD achieved the ordinary time in the seminary, and at the end priesthood was conferred upon me through a dispensation of the Pope, for I was too young by ten months. The day in which, inflamed by twelve years of ecclesiastical studies, prejudices, natural enthusiasm,

long fasting, and mortifications, the day in which I bade farewell to the world, to earth, to all that was human, to consecrate myself to God, I experienced a rapture above all description. I will say only, that in the perpetual alternation of human things, this felicity ought to have been a warning to me of the future pangs which awaited me.

In leaving the holy house,\* I was sent as a vicar to the beautiful city of L\*\*\*\*, celebrated in my native province for its fair society and good manners. Hitherto I had had intercourse only with my coarse fellows of the college and seminary, who are now in France as unpolished as ever, and very far behind the French clergy before the Revolution. The reason of this change is clear enough; formerly the clergy was composed of the sons of the highest families, now of the ignorant peasants, because few others are desirous of entering into this body.

Consequently, after such an education, I brought into the world my blunders, awkwardness, and ignorance of the human heart, and of my own above all; my candour, and an immense need of clinging to, of loving somebody. Hitherto this need had been concentrated, in a superstitious manner, in God. This object was to be changed. An attentive observer could have easily foretold the suf-

\* If I do not speak of the *moral* disorders of the seminary, it is because I saw none in mine, save the study of a dirty Theology. I will explain, in the chapter of the corruption of the clergy, the apparent contradiction between those two assertions.

ferings which awaited me. Nothing previous to this time had warned me of this natural disposition, impressed by the Creator in every living creature. I had never suspected that the step I had but just made was so directly against the author of nature. Marriage, on the contrary, had always been spoken of in the seminary as a weakness, from which the true saints in every situation must abstain, and which it is a horrible crime for a priest ever to think of. I had never thought, of course, how irrational it was to promise that which it is beyond the power of man to perform, and which he is in continual danger of violating. I had never reflected that this impious vow of celibacy, instead of turning me an angel as I intended, would well-nigh turn me into a demon for long years.

A conversation which took place between an old priest and myself, was an alarming announcement of my future condition. He avowed to me frankly that he had not kept his vows of celibacy more than three or four years, because he had found celibacy an "absurd and immoral institution." He asked me if I was not already tired with the same vows. I answered in the negative in great simplicity and astonishment. "Do you not think sometimes," added he, "of marriage since your promotion to the priesthood?" "Never," answered I; "it would be a monstrosity to a priest." "But, Sir," replied he, "do you not deem sometimes that '*it is not good for man to be alone,*' and that your vows are against nature?" "Never; this thought never entered my mind."

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“How old are you?”

“Twenty-five years, nearly.”

“Hum, hum; wait yet some years, some months perhaps, and you will tell me what has become of your religious enthusiasm, of your joy, and of your vow. Like others, you will put nature above falsehoods and lies, and you will trample your foolish promise under your feet. But not yet, you are too young; the power of the instructions of your teachers is yet too strong, too vivid on your mind; you submit yourself to the yoke; but by and by, nature, indeed, will resume her rights.”

“What do you mean, Sir? Explain yourself; for if it is so, why in the seminary has nobody warned me? Why have they not instructed me upon the gravity of such an obligation? It was but justice to enlighten my ignorance.” The old man came near me, seized my arm, and whispered me in the ear with an air of great mystery —“If the superiors of the seminary were frank enough to tell young men *the truth*, there would not be a single priest except those who desire to make use of the veil of religion to indulge their passions!” and, as if afraid of his confidence, he withdrew in great haste.

Such revelations were, however, somewhat useful to me. They increased my diffidence of my own strength. I sought in God what I wanted in myself. I became, if possible, more pious, more mystic, more superstitious. My prayers, and above all, those to the holy Virgin, became longer; my privations and mortifications harder; a hundred times a day I besought God to take my life

rather than permit me to be unfaithful. But all my prayers proved unavailing ; because, doubtless, God does not listen to prayers which are against his will and laws.

My life rolled away amidst the usual occupations of a Catholic priest, filled by the exercises of my ministry, the administration of the sacraments, prayers, discourses, &c. and by and by marked by some particular events, which will be related hereafter. During this time, more than once, when I pronounced the sacramental words of marriage upon young people, and called upon them the heavenly blessing, the feeling of my own loneliness was brought to my mind with a kind of envy of their presumed happiness. More than once, in the Confessional, when a young lady revealed her conscience to me, her spiritual father of twenty-six or seven years of age, I indulged in this forbidden idea, that she would have made me happy had she been my wife ! But all those and such other ideas were momentary. I drove them away like temptations. I said to myself—"Remember, thou art no more a man ; thou art dead to this life ; women are thy greatest enemies." And I, indeed, clung more closely to the altar, to my breviary, and I wrapped myself in my cassock as in a sheet.

However, those strange thoughts were renewed stronger and stronger as days passed : the more I endeavoured to crush human nature the more it rebelled against the yoke. Every thing in the world recalled to me the great law of marriage, and my heart more than all. Sometimes, while reading the Holy Scriptures, I surprised my-

self, involuntarily, in reverie, and before I was aware, upon the picture of the happiness of our first parents in Paradise, upon their tender love, upon the kindness of God who created them for each other. To those words of the Lord, "it is not good for man to be alone," methought my heart answered, "true, it is not good, I begin to feel it: why, then, am I alone?" One evening I was lost in such musing, and I went so far as to ask myself, "Why does man contradict the very institution of his Creator?" But I became quite troubled at my impious questions, and I answered "That our mother, the Catholic Church, was infallible; and that, inspired by the Holy Ghost, she had decided the *celibacy* of priests."

My reflections, although smothered under a thousand prejudices, were renewed, in spite of all my endeavours, by the spectacle of a Protestant married minister of the English Church. He was the curate of a few Protestant families scattered in and around our town. He was, indeed, an able and amiable man, but through the fanaticism of my fellow-priests and my own, he was despised among the Catholic population, and pointed out as an heretic and a propagator of error. In the beginning I scorned him heartily; for this opinion is enjoined upon us in the seminary, that among all the Protestant ministers *there is not one honest and true man*, not one who knows not well the falsehood of his religion and the truth of the Catholic Church. Accordingly I could not look at him without feeling an involuntary uneasiness.

I had become acquainted with him by chance in a

Protestant family into which I went to visit a Catholic servant who was sick. After I had fulfilled my ecclesiastical functions with the sick girl, the mistress said to me, "Sir, if you do not greatly fear the Protestants, there is a gentleman and his wife who will be glad to see you." In the hope of finding some way to their conversion, I saw them, and was very much pleased. My prejudices gave way for want of any foundation. Gradually we became attached to each other: but for fear of my fellow-priests and of public opinion, which would have soon tarnished my character, I did not see him often. Every time I met them I never failed to say to myself, in a true feeling of compassion, "Is it not unfortunate that so amiable a couple should be in heresy, and lost in the next world?" From the very beginning of our acquaintance I had an ardent desire of converting them, but two reasons prevented me from the attempt. The first was this: "He knows well the falsity of his tenets, and it is useless to speak to him about them." The second reason was, "The consciousness of my own ignorance of Protestantism;" for I had studied it very slightly, while he appeared to be a learned scholar: I was too fond of the glory of my religion, to cast a shame upon her by my defeat.

His young wife was beautiful, and they loved each other tenderly. They seemed so happy, notwithstanding their distance from their country and family, that I almost envied their felicity from the bottom of my heart. I compared his fate with mine—his religion, which al-

lowed him the society of a wife, with my Church, which prevents it as the greatest crime in a priest.

One evening I went secretly to take tea with them. I say secretly, for had my bishop been aware of it, he would have reproved me severely, perhaps interdicted me, for he detested Protestants. They showed to me a greater kindness than usual, which caused me to think that they both pitied my sad situation. In the midst of a gay conversation, excited by their pleasant blunders in the French language, the husband said to me, "Sir, we have never spoken about religious matters, although we teach quite contrary to each other in many things."—"True, sir," answered I, blushing; "more than once I have had a mind to enter upon this matter, but I know that religious discussions are too often useless, or serve but to exasperate persons against each other. You have your opinion and I have mine; we probably could not change each other; at all events," added I as a warning to him, "I think that God will not condemn a man who is in an involuntary error." Hereupon he smiled, and replied: "Take care, sir, you have just set aside a great maxim of your Church, '*out of the pale of the Church no salvation.*' But no matter; will you give me leave to say to you, with the frankness of your countrymen, what I often think of you?" "Willingly," replied I, laughing. "Here it is then," said he. "I think that it is a great pity that you should be a Catholic priest; you are not fit for that situation at all, it is easy to see that you do violence to yourself, to your temper, and to nature."

"Sir," answered I, "with the same liberty, it is precisely the opinion I have of you. Every day I lament that you should be a Protestant minister instead of being a Catholic priest." Hereupon, he, his wife, and myself could not refrain from laughing very heartily and friendly together.

"Between ourselves," continued he, his wife being gone out, "what do you think of the celibacy of your religion? As for me, had I only that against it, that alone would prevent me for ever from being reconciled to it. Is it not against nature? Do you deem that your fellow priests keep their vows? I speak not of you, and it is precisely for this reason that you are able to answer me more conveniently." I understood too well his question to give any answer which would have been either against my religion or against truth. "Listen," said he, as I remained silent, "here is a beautiful page of an author, whose name I will not now tell you lest it should influence your mind." He translated this passage from English into French. I have since found this passage in the Life of Luther.

"It is almost as impossible to dispense with female society as it is to live without eating or drinking. The image of marriage is found in all creatures—not only in the animals of the earth, the air, and the water, but also in trees and stones. Every one knows there are trees, such as the apple and pear tree, which are like husband and wife, and which prosper better when planted together. Among stones the same thing may be remarked,

especially in precious stones—the coral, the emerald, and others. The heaven is husband to the earth, he vivifies her by the heat of the sun, by the rain and the wind, and causes her to bear all sorts of plants and fruits.”

“This is a new thought to me,” said I, prepossessed and musing; “it is truly beautiful if *not true*, whoever the author may be.” “He is a man horribly slandered by your church, represented as a monster of corruption; it is Luther. I never understood that passage better than now; here I am at one thousand miles from my country, family, and acquaintances, (he was an Englishman,) but my wife supplies the place of all; in this south of France, where the Catholics are so raised up against us, where I am despised and persecuted sometimes, owing to reasons which you know. If I was alone as you are, I should not be able, perhaps, to bear with my situation; but in spite of my persecutions and my exile, I am sure I am happier than you, for I guess what you suffer in your loneliness. You answer not; perhaps I grieve you, I will not speak of it any more. But I must thank you for having put aside the prejudices of your caste against me, and for not having looked upon me quite as a man entirely out of the pale of the truth.”

## CHAPTER IV.

*Through my ministry I become enamoured with my penitent—My despair—My exertions to smother this love—A reflection—I try to give up her confession—My own confessor forbids it.*

WHEN I left this minister, his words, his reflections, the view of his happiness, and the passage of Luther, remained deeply engraved in my mind, and contributed fervently to increase my uneasiness. However, I gave myself entirely to the functions of my ministry. In a small town, among idle people as they are commonly in the cities of France, my punctuality and zeal were remarked. My sermons, sparkling with my ardent love of God, my enthusiasm in preaching, acquired me the reputation of a preacher; for the more a priest is thundering in the pulpit, the more he is applauded, the more popular he is.

An assiduous reading of pious books, of the holy Bible, were of great use to me in confession, and gave me the reputation of an able confessor. Soon, notwithstanding, or I ought rather to say, because of my youth, I became "à la mode"—all the fashion—among devotees. In France there is a "mode" or fashion for every thing, for confessors as well as for coats or hats. My downcast eyes, my timidity and piety in saying mass, obtained for

me the reputation of a pious priest. Consequently many people came to hear my sermons, applied to me for my advice in confession or my prayers in the mass. I was well nigh believing myself a powerful saint, a heavenly being. Alas ! alas ! I was to be recalled from this height to which my pride had raised me, to my native earth.

My heart, in spite of my whole pretended holiness, was like mountains covered with enormous heaps of snow, where a single breath is often sufficient to bring down the terrible avalanche.

One day a young lady came to the vestry and asked me if I would confess her. I complied with her request. I confessed her often, for she was pious, and received the Lord's Supper at least twice a week. She told me the reason why she had changed her former confessor—a reason which it is not necessary here to tell. In the intimate relation of confessor and penitent, in those repeated conversations in which a young female of nineteen opens her heart every week, in every matter and the most secret thoughts, to a young man of twenty-seven who feels and laments his loneliness, it was not difficult to foresee what would naturally happen. She spoke to me so openly, so candidly ; her confession displayed so fair a character, such artlessness, so much innocence ; that by and by, without any intention or reflection, but by a natural course of things, my heart was caught, and I fell in love with her. I took heed not to give her the least hint of it, because it was worse than useless, since

I was prevented from being married by my vow, by ecclesiastic rules, and also by the laws of the state.\* I thought not an instant of abusing my ministry on her account, which, however, would have been the easiest thing in the world. It remained then for me but to smother this involuntary love. At first I tried to believe it only the effect of my imagination too much kindled. But vain illusion. The more I endeavoured to trample down this feeling, the more I strengthened it, and it increased every day. My virtue, indeed, could prevent me from giving my consent, but it could not prevent my suffering its effects—the mental agony of the conflict. Ere long I saw the inutility of my exertions against it, and I thought I could not do better than to resign myself to the will of God, in the hope that he would, doubtless, help me in my struggles, since I fought for his glory, his church, and my vows.

My first thought, of course, was of removing the danger by refusing any longer to confess her—by giving up the direction of her soul, so perilous was it to mine own.†

\* In France the civil laws still deny the right of marriage to a priest who has once taken the vow, although he may have become a Protestant.

† My only aim is to show in my history the immorality of the Catholic Church in requiring *celibacy from her priests*, and at the same time establishing so many *intimate relations* between *them* and the *female sex*. If I did dare to write some pictures, and show all that I have felt during this most unhappy time, I should have matter enough for an immense book; nor need I make any excursions into the fields of imagination; for, as it has been said already, "there is more romance in real life than in imaginary." Among

As first, in the next confession I wished to sound her on this subject, alleging for that purpose some Jesuitical and apparent reason; for my superiors had taught me never to be at a loss for pretexts. She answered to me —“Father, I gave you my whole confidence. I opened to you my heart, I unveiled to you my most secret thoughts with as much candour as if I was but ten years old, that you might direct me better. You know me as well as I know myself. I do not ask the reasons why you propose to me to exchange you for another. But if you deny me your ministry, I must renounce the confession altogether; for you know yourself why I left my former confessor, and you will not oblige me to go back to him, neither to Mr. D. nor to Mr. L.”

I could not tell her the true reason of my conduct, for my sake and for her own. On the other side I was very superstitious, believing heartily confession quite necessa-

all the new productions of French literature, so extravagant, oftentimes so unnatural, in which the authors search every where for new subjects for striking imagination, by an horrible and fantastical assemblage of crimes caused by love, it has been a matter of wonder to me that these writers, who are far from being restrained by religious scruples, have not made the *love of priests* to figure in their compositions. V. Hugo and G. Sand are exceptions, two of the leaders of the present literature; the former an author, and the latter an authoress; but both have indulged in their vague and usual character of exaggeration, they have represented their priest either as a monster or a madman. But to understand truly what is the love of a priest, who, *faithful to his vows*, smothers it in his bosom without giving it any utterance, it is necessary to have confessed for years the object of his affection, and to have lived in this relation without ever revealing his passion to her.

ry to the salvation of the soul. Could I then, with my ideas of confession, assent to the loss of her soul? I remembered that a true priest ought ever to expose his own salvation for the sake of others, and consequently the design of sending her to another seemed a horrible temptation of the Devil. However, in a matter of so great importance I feared to direct myself; and as in the seminary I had been told a hundred times that our confessor ought to rule all our business, I went to him, I looked to him as to my father and the representative of God; for I practised what I taught others, viz. that the confessor is the vicegerent of God. He listened to my singular declaration, and to my purpose of renouncing her confession if he thought best. He laughed at me; and notwithstanding all my explanations, he could not, or would not, understand me; and at length told me that my love for her was far from being a reason of depriving her of my ministry.

There then remained no doubt in my own mind, and I thought that God himself had ordered it so. But to diminish the danger I resolved to avoid any intercourse with her, except in the confessional; and henceforth I ceased to pay any visit to her family, where I went before, oftentimes to evening parties, for fear of seeing her and increasing my fatal attachment; for the holy Bible says—"Quisquis amat periculum in illo peribit;" "whosoever loves danger, shall perish in it." Her family, astonished at my sudden desertion, and especially her mother, asked me why I had deserted their house, if they

had offended me? Thanks to my subterfuges, I avoided the question; and thus I, who would have found my joy, my happiness in this house, banished myself from the family where all the desires of my heart carried me.

In speaking of what I suffered in repressing my feelings, I shall be scarcely, if at all, understood by men who put their hearts in open air—who act unreservedly—who obey the just dictates of nature, instead of having been inured to despise them and trample upon them; by men to whom the lake of great emotions is always drained, because they do not subvert the sacred institutions of their Creator. These men know not with what violence this sea of human passion ferments, gushes out, when every issue is denied to it; how it increases, swells, overflows, bursts the heart, till it has torn away its bounds and dug for itself a channel.

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## CHAPTER V.

*I have recourse to the heaviest mortifications—I destroy my health—  
The epidemic disease—I wish for death, vainly.*

IN this sad situation I sought for my relief in the tenets of my religion, and after reading over all my books of Theology to find there some plan of conduct, I adopted the following. “This is,” said I, “a corporeal temptation, which cannot be vanquished by prayers alone, nor even

by a common mortification ; it requires an extraordinary one, (for mortification, it is inculcated in the seminary, is the great remedy against every evil.) Consequently, with all the violence of my temper I began my work of destruction against my body, as a mad, young misled man, who declares a war of extermination against himself. My heart became a field of battle between my fanaticism and my nature ; for I was persuaded that the more I could crush my body, the better I should master it, and obtain tranquillity. My senses became my foes, and as they are represented in my pious books as the doors through which sin enters into the soul, I embraced them all in a general arrest of proscription.

At first, as to an enemy shut in a besieged town, I cut off the provisions to it, and I starved my body. It was easy to me to fast secretly, because my fellow priests and I did not breakfast together on account of our masses. Thus nobody could perceive that I totally renounced the use of this meal, and the secret was very important to me. I was up at half past four, and till twelve I ate or drank nothing. Sometimes I was very weak in the morning towards ten ; above all, when I was obliged to remain three or four hours in my confessional, which was my hardest work. But I rejoiced at my uneasiness, thinking that the more my body should be weakened, the more my spirit would be strong. I kept resolute till dinner-time, and in this meal I found always means of mortifying myself in spoiling my food ; for example, with too great a quantity of salt or of vinegar. The

dinners of priests (I will give some account of this interesting matter hereafter) are celebrated for their luxuriousness, and, commonly speaking, few people keep a better table. I deprived myself as much as possible of the best things, of every wine, liquor, and coffee, to the great astonishment of my companions, to whom I was obliged to say that the state of my health required such precautions. But my excuses were not very well received, and many times I saw them smiling in a mysterious manner. In the supper, under the same pretext I ate almost nothing; and every body can imagine what a young man of twenty-seven must suffer with only one meal for the whole day. I can truly say that usually I felt all the pangs of hunger and starvation.

My bed, without being that of a sybarite, I judged to be too soft for a man of sin as I was. I retrenched the feathers, afterwards the matrass, and I slept or tried to sleep upon the straw bed; and in the times of the great Catholic solemnities, upon the floor. I wore a species of hair-cloth, with small points around my loins, which tormented me sufficiently day and night. I avoided carefully all parties of pleasure, soirées, music, which was my delight, walking, and all society. I deprived my eyes of their natural use, by keeping them constantly down, to remind myself that I was earth, and doomed to the earth, and especially for fear of casting them upon a woman. I deprived myself even of the smell of a flower, as too sensual; of the use of fire for ever. I knelt for hours on the cold pavement of the sanctuary or of my room, to bruise

my body : I redoubled my confessions, prayers, beads, &c. I shut myself in my cell, while in the world and in society I should have naturally dissipated all these gloomy thoughts ; for passions are like sounds, they resound deeper in the most silent abodes.

I had read in the life of Saint Jerome, who was in a situation like mine, that to chain down his imagination he had studied Hebrew. I thought that a good remedy, and I resolved to follow his example ; not in Hebrew, which I could not learn without a master ; but in Greek, which I had not studied in the seminary. I gave to it all the time which I should have given to my recreations and pleasures ; and I can say that this is the only good idea which I had among all my foolishness.

I had learned also (probably in some legends, but I cannot well remember where,) that there are some refreshing plants, the juice of which was infallible to destroy the natural state of the body. I sought them, and after some inquiries I made for myself, with the juice of the water-lily and other similar plants, a potion capable of poisoning me ; I drank it with so little discretion that it well nigh cured me, not of the intended evil only, but of my life also, in less than three months. In consequence of my fastings, of these immoderate and poisonous potions, and of some other pious follies, I spoiled my health, and I became almost unable to digest any thing. But, instead of being alarmed at this result, I rejoiced in my blindness at all that could hurt me, thinking firmly it was my duty to do so.

The presumed merit of my mortifications was the only comfort which could encourage me in saying mass. For since I had become a lover of another being than God, although against my will, I was ashamed to mount the altar, to call him from heaven with the same mouth which was sometimes ready to pronounce a profane name, to introduce him into a heart where a worldly idol was introduced in spite of myself.

Thus, quite troubled by this species of sacrifice, I, who sacrificed my health, my life, to what I thought to be my duty, presented myself at the altar, trembling as a guilty man appearing before his judge; and when I held up in my hands, as I believed, this same God, creator of the world, I besought him to fortify me, to preserve me from evil.

The decay of my health, which was nearly ruined by my extravagance, and the advice of a physician who was at a loss to guess the cause of my suffering, gave me a fair hope of being a voluntary martyr to my vow and fidelity. I regretted ardently not to have lived in those early days of the Church, when my desire would have been promptly satisfied by an immediate death during the persecutions. Such were my dispositions and desire of death, when, as if God had granted my vows, an epidemical disease appeared in our city. I thanked heaven heartily while deploring the fate of the victims. I congratulated myself, for I hoped to find death in the fulfilment of my ministry. My fellow priests, who did not coincide with my views, for many reasons were not ve-

ry fond of administering the sacraments to those infected people, and left me at liberty to follow my inclination. They saw in my ardour but the spirit and enthusiasm of a young man, which would pass away after some time, and through which their interests would profit. Consequently I administered to nearly all the dying people during this disease. Day and night I was sitting at the bolster of infected persons, and one can scarcely conceive with what pleasure I approached my ear to their pestilential mouths to receive their confession. I passed my finger, dipt in the holy oil, for the extreme unction, upon their body, already the prey of death, in the hope of catching the same plague. Twice or three times death seized them during my operation, and it was a delicious consolation to say to myself—"A few days and I also shall not suffer any more the burden of life; my mental and corporeal diseases will be cured." But these hopes, like all my others, were deceived. I was doomed to life and to suffering for long years. The epidemic passed away; each remembered my devotion without knowing its cause. I was obliged to begin again my former mode of life, which I had a little suspended for the sake of charity. I again shut myself up in my room against the world; but, like the wounded deer, which carries with him the arrow which has pierced his heart.

## CHAPTER VI.

*View of the Clergy—My astonishment at my first discoveries of their character—Their intemperance—Their licentious conversation—Their dinners—A general sketch of the corruption of the Priests—Their children—An ecclesiastical retreat—My reproaches to my Confessor for his conduct.*

I HAVE omitted to speak of some events which happened before and during this time, and which I will now relate. Hitherto, mingling the least I could with my fellow priests, I had had few occasions to judge of them, except through my prejudices, which showed to me a saint in each one of them. This favourable opinion, the fruit of my blindness, was by and by destroyed in consequence of the discoveries I made among them, which became inconsistent with it. I found myself in their company on some unavoidable occasions, and I saw them as they were. In the beginning, indeed, I thought I dreamed; but by dint of further acquaintance and of my own reflections, I saw that I did by no means dream, and to my great sorrow and disappointment. It was, however, a long time ere I could abandon my former opinion; for it is always painful to our self-love to avow its errors.

It was only when there were no laymen among them that I could judge the truth; for when there were any,

then my companions, to preserve their respect, kept appearances perfectly well. But when we were alone, without profane men, their deeds and conversation scandalized my ignorance, or rather, offended the natural self-respect that every honest man feels. Many of them spoke of the most disgusting matters with such lightness, such jests, that I believed I did not understand well; and I gazed at them as would a country boy, who, having never been from home, suddenly finds himself in the midst of a great city, and wonders with open eyes, mouth, and ears. They took no notice of my ill-disguised surprise. They drank to excess, and much more than it is allowed now to drink in France, save in the lowest classes. The strongest coffee, the most heating wines, liquors, spirits, and, above all, brandy, in an astonishing quantity, were their common drinks. I involuntarily asked myself how they could keep their vow of chastity with this habit, since nothing is so exciting as the use of spirits. That was a deep mystery to me.

On these occasions, when they had but just reason enough to join ideas together, but not enough to distinguish what they might avow, and what they ought to keep secret, they made revelations wonderful, indeed, in themselves, but which astonished only me and some other ignorant dupes like myself. They spoke about their mistresses, &c. as freely as of Theology; and one of them boasted of having one in each parish round his own. He was much applauded, and some expressed their regrets at not being so fortunate. One day, one of these worthy

priests, who had preserved a little more reason than the others, hinted to them in covered words, that they spoke too freely before two other young men and myself, (they were about twenty years of age,) meaning that we were not yet sufficiently advanced to understand them; for in the ecclesiastical body it is exactly as in a regiment, where the raw recruits are scorned by the veterans who have made fifteen campaigns. But the others, yielding to the influence of good wine, which unties tongues, answered that we were not men to betray them, or to denounce them to the bishops; and so they continued their revelries.

The subject of religion itself was not treated with more respect by them. That faith, the least article of which I worshipped truly, was indecently laughed at in its most sacred tenets, either by a real impiety or by jesting. Sometimes, after those edifying meetings, which lasted for half a day, half a night, or sometimes a whole night, amidst bottles, jesting, and playing at cards, they went to fulfil their ministry, to administer to sick people, or to confess women! How admirably they were fitted for those functions! And then, in the performance of their ecclesiastical duties, at mass, in the breviary, in the prayers, &c. they conducted in such an unbecoming manner that I wondered a thousand times how people could possibly have faith in a religion represented and taught by such ministers. Their ignorance, too, disgusted me. At that time, indeed, I was not myself much more learned, but I had the desire of knowledge. When I heard them speak-

ing the language of ignorant peasants or of beggars, when I saw their writings without orthography, I was exceedingly shocked that such should be the ministers of a religion the glory of which was my most ardent desire. I never saw them ascend the pulpit without internally fearing for them; while they remained there I trembled, and I was relieved only when they ceased speaking without having made some very gross blunder. The people in that case, owing to their favourable opinion of their holy ministers, set down even their faults to the credit of their timidity, and they revered them the more on account of them.

In reading the ecclesiastical history of the time previous to the Revolution of 1793, I learned the inconceivable corruption of the clergy, although the half of the truth is not told. In studying the code of their laws, I saw a chapter about the "*Sons of Priests*." This discovery more than any other, put me quite to a non plus; but afterwards I saw, with my own eyes, that even in the nineteenth century, if there was not such an article in the new French code, it was not for want of matter to compose it; for I knew, beyond all doubt, some children whose fathers were the sacred members of the Catholic Church.\* In the confession I had obtained very valuable knowledge upon their morals in listening to the confession

\* This, however, seldom happens; for priests take great care to destroy, or rather to prevent appearing, all those proofs of their misconduct. In another place I will give some further account of this matter,

of those people who had had relation with them. The discovery of their licentiousness, with the knowledge of their doctrine respecting falsehood, duplicity, mental restrictions, distinctions, and their thousand forms of lies more or less disguised, which are indisputably the exclusive appendage of the Roman clergy, made me ashamed of myself and of such associates; whom, if I cannot boast of having left as soon, perhaps, as I ought, I can truly say I have never imitated.

Some years after, when I had entirely resolved to escape from such a den of corruption and ignorance, I wished to have the satisfaction of charging home a pointed reproof to my former confessor, to him who had deceived me so cruelly into the vow of priesthood. But to shut his mouth by the seal of the confession, which he would not dare infringe, (for the Catholic clergy boast that the secret of the confession has never been revealed since its institution, we shall soon see the truth of this Jesuitical assertion,) I dealt out that reproof in the confessional, during my annual and last "retreat."\* He

\* An *Ecclesiastic retreat* is a week passed in the seminary house amidst pious exercises. Every priest is requested to attend it. They have been instituted to *renovate* and *entertain* their *piety* and *virtue*, to recall them to their duty. Priests leave their parishes for this week, and you may be sure dread much those seven days of penance, of a life so different from their habits, and under the eyes of their superiors. It is pleasant to see how they constrain themselves before their teachers, whom they cheat into a belief of their sanctity. I was astonished to see, at such seasons, the greatest wretches, whose crimes I knew as well as my breviary, yet who appeared then the most pious, the most regular; and who impressed the mind

asked me, as usual, how I felt myself in my situation ; if I was always in the same disposition as when I was in the seminary ? For this once I made him this answer—“ Father, you are the author of all my troubles—of all the unhappiness of my life. When, many years ago, with all your influence you forced me into this situation, you knew the character of this impious priestcraft, and you concealed the truth from me. When you excited my desires to devote myself to this office, you spoke to me of holy men who consecrate themselves to the glory of God, to the salvation of souls, to the diffusion of truth ; you knew that you were leading me among a society of coarse, ignorant, and vile men. When you spake to me of the obligations of a priest, you presented to me the picture of most sublime virtues ; and you knew that you were introducing me among a vicious set of men, whose virtue is hypocrisy—an hypocrisy which conceals from profane

even of the superiors with a strong opinion of their virtues. Inso-much that when there were any complaints made against their immorality from their parishes or from other places, the bishop, (who, indeed is himself no better, but who, like all others, is obliged to hide his excesses, and to be cautious of going contrary to public opinion), was unwilling to believe in the misconduct of a man whom he had seen kneeling, praying, keeping his eyes cast down, speaking only of God, the Virgin Mary, and the saints.

This week of retreat, passed in this assemblage of professional hypocrites, was very useful to me, for I learned here to know them and men in general. I saw that the most depraved men, who deserved only the house of correction, or even worse, were the lowest slaves of the bishop ; and obtained, by their servile conduct to him, the best situations. After leaving the retreat, they laughed heartily at their trick and at the bishop.

eyes its baseness and its infamy. When you insidiously used the sacred authority of God to obtain my assent, and to gain me to your profession which I hesitated to enter ; when you forced me, by your threats of eternal punishment, to become a priest, to take the vow of perpetual celibacy ; you knew that I should be either a most unhappy man or an infringer of my vow. Oh ! It is you who have cruelly deceived me ; you who have abused my trusting ignorance. At this time, when, in consequence of your threats, I made my first step, my irrevocable step, at twenty-one years\* of age, I had before me in the world the prospect of a fine career ; the world smiled upon me. In any other situation I should have been a happy and useful citizen, enjoying the benefits of God ; and it is you, whom I have revered as my father, it is you who have led me astray, robbed me of my youth and opportunities of usefulness. It is you who have made me an unhappy, a fanatical, almost an impious man, by your superstitions ; a man in opposition to nature—to the sacred institution of God—a teacher of lies. Now I am obliged to begin the world again, to adopt a new mode of life ; for I will no longer deceive men in teaching your superstitions. But that I may not be interdicted and dishonoured by your despotism, I shall fly my country to escape from your yoke.”

He was mute with astonishment, listening to my ready prepared accusation. At length he recovered himself, and

\* This is the age of the first irrevocable engagement which binds as well to the priesthood as to celibacy, &c.

endeavoured to change my mind and to justify himself. "Sir," I replied, "all will be useless ; I have once been simple enough to listen to you, hope no more to deceive me. It is irrevocable. This is my last confession."

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## CHAPTER VII.

*The result of my discoveries—History of a young nun—her conversation—her uneasiness—I rescue her—Her marriage—her happiness.*

ALTHOUGH, every time I found myself in the company of my fellow priests, I witnessed the disgusting spectacle which I have described, my faith in the doctrines of Popery was so strong, so deep, that this faith was not shaken in consequence. "Priests are men," said I ; "feeble, weak ; but faith is divine, the church infallible. Their excesses cannot excuse me. I must be wise and faithful." Instead of following their example, I clung stronger than ever to my faith, and I thought myself obliged to do penance for *their misconduct*. However, if I still remained for some time longer in my profession, my zeal was no longer for making proselytes. On the contrary, by a natural feeling of humanity and charity, as far as possible, (at least as soon as I perceived clearly enough the immorality of the celibacy of our church,) I prevented young men at confession from thinking of the priesthood. If I have been a cause of errors in teach-

ing, for ten years nearly, the Catholic faith, I have at least saved from destruction some young people of whom their blind families intended making priests; and a young lady, whom I rescued from a nunnery. I beg leave to relate her story; it may not be useless.

I went one day to pay a visit to one of my friends, the almoner in a convent of nuns in a neighbouring city. In order to honour me as a stranger, they wished to have me say the mass, at which the whole house assisted. During this mass, it was the custom for the noviciates to sing canticles; and this office was performed by those who, endowed with a fine voice and knowledge of music, could acquire some celebrity for the holy house. It was easy, under the influence of delightful music, to imagine within it the hovering wings of that tranquillizing resignation one would deem so useful to soothe the heart in such solitary cloisters.

Among the voices one of them struck me sensibly. She celebrated the happiness of one who serves God in solitude, the vanity of earthly things according to popish exaggeration, which always seduces young and inexperienced hearts. It seemed to me, that in this voice there was a melancholy, a sadness, an infallible evidence of suffering and heart sickness. But it was so sweet, so expressive, and so captivating, that, sad by its sadness, enchanted by its soft melody, I forgot the mass which required my whole attention. Arrived at the end of the epistle, I stopt involuntarily, still listening to the delightful music, bewildered by the harmonious voice, as the bird

is said to be charmed by the serpent's eye. At length the mass servant, astonished at my stopping, stepped up to the altar, and asking me if I was unwell, broke my reverie. Happily no one questioned the cause of it.

According to custom, I made a short address to the community after mass, which, with the thanksgiving, I had scarcely finished, when I was told that a young novice asked for me in the parlour. This demand was so uncommon, (as I knew nobody in the convent,) that I thought it my duty to inform the almoner of it, and beg his leave to see her. He told me that this novice was the musician who sang at my mass, and who, struck by some ideas of my address, desired earnestly to speak to me. "Do not fail," said he to me, "to *encourage* her in her desire to become a nun; she is a precious subject; her name, her beauty, her musical talent, her knowledge, her family, and her dowry, all are a good *fortune* to our house. Were she to leave us, all these would be lost. Go, and, holy priest as you are, warm her zeal."

The sister *Mary*, (her name in the convent, for every nun takes a new name on going into it,) had preceded me in the parlour, and waited for me alone, against the rules of nunneries. But this privilege had been granted to my *great holiness*, so it was said; but in reality that I might better forward the designs against her. I feared very much, as I have already said, the company of women. I hesitated to approach the grate,\* had not the same

\* In the parlour there is a grate, through which nuns speak with strangers. In this grate is a window or door, which is *opened sometimes*.

sweet voice invited me very kindly. "Perhaps," said she, "I ought to ask your pardon for having called in this strange manner upon one who does not know me." "Speak, sister," answered I; "I shall be too happy if I can be of any service to you." "You can very much, Sir, very much indeed," she replied; "your discourse has won my confidence. I have long besought God that I might meet with an able and trust-worthy priest, by whom I might be enlightened upon a matter on which my present happiness and future salvation depend. God, who always listens to the prayers of a sincere heart, has been pleased to listen to me. It is not my confession\* I will make; it is only a matter of private confidence, and I require your advice; it will determine my remaining here or leaving this house. You see, then, Sir," added she, smiling and lifting upon me her beautiful blue eyes, "that the matter is of some importance. I have been three years in this convent as a pupil and novice. I shall soon be of the proper age to take my vows. I need not tell you how happy I was in the beginning. You, perhaps, during your noviciate, experienced the same feelings. Such a state of union with God, of unspeakable sweetness, lasted for fifteen months, in which my body only was on the earth, my heart being in heaven. But alas, those ecstasies have ceased; my imagination has become calm; my exercises of piety, which fill the whole day, please me less and less. They do not yet disgust

\* In the convents, only the priest approved by the bishop, *ad hoc*, has a power for the confession of nuns. Another priest who should confess them would be excommunicated. A Popish police!

me; but now I go to them as I went formerly in the world to the balls at the end of a winter when I was tired of them. This kind of indifference makes me uneasy. My confessor says, that *after my vows* my former happiness will come again; that my present state of coldness is a trial from God, which will cease so soon as I shall be a nun. In two months\* I must pronounce my vows. Judge now of my perplexity!

"And, Sir, I will tell you all. Previous to my coming into this convent, I had been acquainted with a young gentleman, who wooed me for his wife. My mother refused him, for he had not fortune enough. Soon after, family considerations induced my mother to persuade me to enter into this house, where, at first wholly given up to God, I thought little of my lost lover; but in proportion as my devotion diminishes, the recollection of him returns; his memory has become agreeable to me, and I often find myself asking if I should not be happier with him than in these walls. This question, which at first I feared to answer, is almost resolved in the affirmative. Such is my situation. What must I do? Speak to me, Sir; your decision will be a light to me, for my confessor reiterates but one thing, and that is, that I must be a nun; and he does not clear up my difficulties."†

\* Before the Revolution, young girls, deceived by their confessors or families, took their vows at almost every age. Now it is necessary that the noviciate should be twenty-one years old. Government, by this half-wise law, has done the half of its duty. Let us hope that eventually it will perform the whole.

† To conceive this singular enough conversation, it is necessary

The solution was not at all embarrassing, even for a prejudiced mind as mine yet was. Her story was my story, with this difference, that she could go back, while I could not; for me it was too late. While she thus explained her mind, each word was a wound to me in recalling to me my own unhappiness. Inwardly I groaned that I had not found a human being to warn me as I was about to warn her. I blessed God for this opportunity of preventing her becoming another victim. I thanked him with my whole heart for having called me to save this poor young girl from the snares of her Superiors before she had accomplished her own sacrifice.

I was resolved upon my answer. Experience in confessing women had taught me, that in matters of conscience a priest must never look dubious or hesitating, because they would think he is uncertain, perhaps in error, and so they take the contrary course; whereas, if he looks positive and decided, like a pedant explaining to his pupils what he does not himself understand, then the imagination of women is subdued, they believe they hear the voice of heaven, and give the most absolute and blind obedience.\*

I wished to profit by all these circumstances for her sake. "Sister," answered I, "there is not a shadow of

that Protestants should know what great confidence the female sex, and especially nuns, have in their confessor.

\* This is precisely the way in which so many priests abuse the confidence of their penitents. I will soon explain this in the chapter on the Confession of Women.

doubt. The religious life does not suit you at all. Bless God, who gives you this warning through the disgust of your pious exercises, your gradual and progressive remissness, and the return of affection for this gentleman. God, indeed, calls you to the world; and be not so bold as to despise his inspirations in remaining here against heaven's decision. You would compromise your eternal salvation, while in this life you would be continually disgusted with your vocation. Your days will pass in regret and bitterness; at each moment you will curse your existence, and the vows which have made it thus miserable."

I had spoken with earnest zeal, with all the signs of true interest, and all the desire of saving a deluded woman on the very brink of a precipice. When I ceased speaking, I saw her blooming features beaming with satisfaction and joy. "O thank you," she said, joining her hands together, "God will bless you; you relieve me from a burden which overloaded me. All that you have said, I have said to myself a thousand times, but I feared it was a crime. My confessor told me so, and he directed me to drive such ideas from my mind; because, he said, my calling to the religious life was certain. I ought to forget the world and my family, and to be entirely devoted to God."

Suddenly she fell into her former sadness. Her cheeks, which were just now blooming, took again their usual paleness—the fruit of the corporal penances of the convent and of mental thralldom. "How," said she, "shall

I manage to leave this house? There is the difficulty ;\* do not, Sir, for the love of God, forsake your work."

I calmed her fears, and assured her that nothing was easier. However, I affected to be more tranquil than I was in reality, for I knew too well the business in which I had embarked. Owing to prejudices, it was not an easy matter to accomplish my undertaking. Moreover, if my bishop should acquire the least knowledge of it, I should be interdicted for having caused *religion* to lose such a handsome, well-born, and wealthy a subject; I should be disgraced in the eyes of the world by this interdiction. All these considerations did not stop me for a moment. A few months previous another young novice, unable to bear any longer the awful life of the same cloister, and finding nobody to whom she could trust herself, leaped over, in her despair, the walls of the enclo-

\* The poor girl was right. Such are the prejudices, that when a young girl enters a convent only in order to try her calling, it is almost impossible for her to return again to the world with a good reputation. The Superior says to those who are desirous of entering convents, that if they are not satisfied after some months' residence, they can return again to their families. But not so; many of them, indeed, conceive a horrible disgust for the cloister after some time. But how can they go back to the world to be called runaway nuns, apostates, to be laughed at and marked? They know well that that is their only lot, and consequently nothing is more rare than to see a sister leaving a convent. They like better to devour in silence their sorrows, to remain alive in their grave, than to be the sport and jest of their fellow-creatures. France is filled with these houses, these abodes of unfortunate girls whom imagination or seduction brings there, and whom prejudices ever after condemn to an eternal prison.

sure, and made her escape. The holy Superior, and the no less holy bishop, published that she was mad. It was an infamous falsehood; but their design in saying so was to diminish the scandal arising from her probable revelations. I wished not that my fair sister M. should be reduced to such extremity, and I resolved rather to expose myself to all dangers than to forsake her. I urged her to keep carefully our secret, and not speak of it to any one, especially to her almoner, who would destroy my projects, and denounce me to my superiors in spite of our friendship.

As I left her, this priest, anxious and tired of waiting for me, asked me what sister M. had spoken of so long. As a true disciple of Escobar, I answered that she had some trifling scruples about my address, but it was nothing. That was only a part of the truth, for I was obliged to make him a dupe. Had he guessed my designs, he would have driven me away from his holy house.

The physician of the convent was a learned and honest man. I went to him directly after one of those matchless breakfasts to be found only in the convents for the spiritual fathers. "I want your service, sir," said I to him; "but first I require your word of honour for the secret." "I give it you willingly," answered he. I then made him acquainted with my affair. "You alone," added I, "are able to help; as Sister M. must feign a severe illness, you will decide that it is a disease of the lungs, which cannot be cured in a cloister, and prescribe her native air. You will speak of the cares of

a family, &c. &c. You understand, I suppose?" "Very well, Sir, very well; upon my honour Theology is a fine science," answered he, laughing and taking my hand; "that is a worthy plan of a worthy Jesuit. You are a reasonable priest, at least; the first I have met; all the others are fond of pulling every body into convents and monasteries. But beware of the bishop."

On the next day my doctor went to the cloister. Sister M. by his direction feigned to be ill. A few days after he called for the Superior, and with an earnest and serious tone, he said to her—"Madam, Sister M. is very ill, her lungs are affected. For a long time I have suspected and feared it. To-day there is no doubt. As she is still free, I advise you to send her to her family." It was a great disappointment to the Superior, who founded fair hopes on her. Sister M. at first seemed to resist the force of arguments, the better to conceal her design; at length she yielded, and was sent to her family *for some months*. After this time she promised, if her health permitted, that she *would* return to the convent. But the physician being consulted, answered that it would be to go to certain death, and her whole family besought her to remain at home. Nobody suspected her design, for she appeared to consent very reluctantly to live in the midst of the *corruption* of the world. (Such is the epithet applied to the world in the convents, which are a species of ark, out of which every one is lost.)

In the meanwhile I wrote to her former lover, and he was made acquainted with all the truth. He saw Miss

C., who was no more Sister Mary. Her mother, on her part, saw in a marriage the only way of preventing her daughter from *going* into the cloister, and her former opposition to their union gave way. Time went on, Sister M. had put on again her profane garments. By and by she again entered society. But, regardful of public opinion, she deferred her marriage until about twenty months after leaving the convent. At length the marriage was celebrated. Some time after I paid the happy pair a visit. The husband and wife, then in the height of their happiness, threw themselves together on my neck as I walked in. "Oh, my dear Sir," said they both to me, "you are indeed welcome. Behold our happiness, and enjoy *your own work*." The young bride said, "I regard *you as my father*, you have saved me. But for you, I should be now shut in a cloister, groaning and mourning. Instead of it I have a good husband, and I am the happiest woman in the world. Thanks, thanks to you, for it is you who have done all; God bless you." This day was the happiest day of my life since I became a priest. How sweet is the reflection of having done good—of having prevented misery! Why do not men look for this happiness oftener? It is the most precious privilege allowed by heaven to man. Why do they deprive themselves of this enjoyment? I never felt more vividly the luxury of causing happiness to others; but alas! at the same time I never more sensibly felt the utter desolation of my own lot.\*

\* I do not speak of the *disorders* of the convents, because I never

## CHAPTER VIII.

*My regrets at being a priest—Immoral tendency of the confession of young ladies by young priests—My singular precautions—The jests of my fellow priests—My trouble on the administration of the sacrament of marriage.*

FROM the day in which I felt that *I was not an angel*, and that my heart became attached to a person of whom my vow forbade me to think, a revolution was begun in my existence—a revolution which was to be achieved when doubts of the truth of my faith at length pressed upon me. Before this time my soul was full of limpid light. I enjoyed God, as I believed, with all the rapture of superstition. My peace and happiness were scarcely troubled. But now, darkness, sadness, and chaos were to take the place of those former blessings. This love for a woman, instead of being, as it is intended by God, a source of free enjoyment, was my tormentor. My heart began to rebel against the chain of my iron vow, which sealed me to the cold stones of the altar. Previously, my prayers or my imagination had made the soul mistress of the body, and hardly had I ever thought of woman. But since I dealt with them in my

*saw them. Nunneries are severely interdicted to every priest, save the confessor of the house. I know them not enough to give any accurate details.*

ministry, above all since I confessed Miss B., I felt a depression which I could not resist or dissipate. Yes, there was in me something which I knew not, another being which was not myself. Against this new being I exerted all my powers, they were all vain. Life was for the first time spoiled of charms and enjoyments, of which I had scarcely ever thought before, but which now I clearly saw I had lost for ever. All sounded hollow to me; she crossed always my mind at my prayers, at my works, bringing to me a feeling of unspeakable bitterness. I remembered I was a priest, condemned by the *civil law* as well as the ecclesiastical, to celibacy; and by my vow I must drive her image from my mind. I remembered that I had myself raised an insuperable barrier between her and me.

This prohibition of the civil law, the fruit of prejudices in the government, and the result of policy and hypocrisy in the Catholic church, was sad and cruel; but there was no remedy; it was necessary that in my capacity of a priest, I should turn again the point of the dagger to my heart. The relations of a confessor and his penitent are so multiplied in our ministry, that I was many times with the object of my love and my dread. This intercourse of young girls and young unmarried priests is the fulness of immorality; an occasion of glaring disorders or of the most cruel struggles. The obligation to attend to my duties at the confessional was the most awful of all my functions, because I always dreaded to find there women in general, but especially

Miss B. Indeed, had I been less attached to what I thought my duty as a priest, I would have had a delight in speaking with her in those moments when she opened her heart and confessed her sins ; but I was the slave of my vow, and I thought it a mortal sin merely to think of her voluntarily. Before I went to my confessional, I never failed to fortify myself with all the pretended arms of popish invention. I covered myself with scapulars, (a species of ecclesiastical talisman,) relics of the most celebrated saints ; I sprinkled myself with a great deal of holy water. (I know not if I must smile or beg the reader's pardon.) I recited many prayers adapted and composed for this occasion ; I put on my surplice, and kissed it devoutly, because it is the emblem of our purity by its whiteness ; and I said, "*Indue me, domine, novum hominem qui secundum Deum, creatus est in justitia et sanctitate veritatis,*"—"Wrap me, O Lord, in the new man, who was created in the justice and holiness of truth." Afterwards I prostrated myself before a statue of the Virgin Mary, whom I had taken for my patroness on account of her purity ; here, kneeling and groaning, I besought her humbly, with an unspeakable fervour, to protect me, to keep me spotless. Sometimes my preparations and prayers were so long that the people waiting, tired with so long a delay, would go away ; but the next day I must swallow the pill. In this manner, well fortified, strengthened, and armed with all the weapons from the papal arsenal, I went to the tribunal of penance. Before opening the wicket through which the

words of confession were to come to me, I addressed yet to heaven a short aspiration to renew my strength ; and then I found myself nearly in contact with the object of my dread. In this situation, separated from her only by a wicket, I was obliged to listen to her confession, to the most secret thoughts of a young lady whom I worshipped. Breathless, I received her words. I heard the very pulsations of her heart. Each of her words was a drop of dew falling on a withered ground ; or rather I should say, they were so many living coals. I can never tell all that I suffered at those moments.

She ceased speaking, and waited for my advice or observations. But I, beside myself, yet listened, plunged in reverie. At length, astonished at my silence, she would say, "Father, have you not heard me ?" This title of father from her, her voice restored me to myself. I addressed my counsels to her with a trembling voice. She had so great a confidence in me, that I could turn her mind whichever way I wished. But heaven is my witness that I never spoke to her a word which I could not repeat before her mother ; but I was convinced, beyond all doubt, of the great impropriety and the awful dangers of confession to the fair penitent if the confessor be wicked, and to himself if he be virtuous. When her confession, so painful to me, was over, I dismissed her. Sometimes, when I was no more master of my imagination, I drove pins into my body, in order that, occupied by my pains, I could not think of her. These confessions, these exertions, wearied me in an

incredible degree ; and I left the confessional fatigued, harassed, exhausted. After reciting the "Te Deum," to thank God for my victory, I went home to be the object of the jests of my fellow priests, who, by my discomposed look, surmised the cause of my uneasiness. "You are too scrupulous, dear Sir," said they to me, jesting with each other : "it is strange enough that you are not yet accustomed to the confession of women. Do not vex yourself so much about it ; you are not an angel, but a man. If you are not wise, you will never be at ease ; follow our example. Confession of young ladies is not a hard matter to us. Soon it will be easy to you also ; have patience." In seeing them so peaceful, so careless about this terrible matter, so dreadful to me, I thought them great saints, dead to human weakness, (for I did not understand the true meaning of their words,) and I chafed and reproached myself for not being as holy as they were.

The days when I was to give her the holy communion were my worst days ; and these were every week, once or twice, or more. At other times my relations with her were not so intimate. In the confession, for example, I was not obliged to see her, to look at her ; but at the holy table I must of necessity see her ; therefore I was trembling during the "Confiteor," (a prayer previous to communion,) while opening the tabernacle where the wafer is inclosed. It often occurred that, in my struggles with myself, I lost the thread of my ideas, and forgot what I was to do ; and I have sometimes shut up again

the tabernacle without having administered the sacrament. The boy who answered me perceived my distraction, and reminded me that there was somebody at the holy table; my senses returned to me; my agitation increased while going down the steps of the altar; and having arrived near her, my hand trembled convulsively in taking the holy wafer and putting it upon her tongue. People, seeing me in this agitation, attributed it to the fear of God, whom I held in my hands; an opinion very useful to my fame for piety, for each one said—"What a pious and holy priest! How deep is his faith in the real presence!"

Of all the functions of my ministry, that which I filled the most willingly was the administration of the sacraments to dying people, and burials; because they put under my eyes the picture of death, my only hope and desire. I panted after it as a prisoner longs for the day of his liberty, as an unhappy man for happiness. I watched those persons with delight, at seeing death coming to take his prey, beginning the dissolution of the body, putting an end to their existence. I desired to be in their place, and delivered of this heavy burden. I fixed my eyes upon this work of destruction, and I started with secret hope. I followed the coffin to the grave, where each shovel of earth falling on the coffin went to my heart, and I found there an echo which delighted me. But God mocked at my earnest desire, I was riveted to life. I interrogated the tomb and death, and my voice resounding in the desert, returned to me unanswered.

On the contrary, I disliked the administration of the sacraments of baptism and marriage; because in the former I met often with young god-mothers, and in the latter with young people who brought to mind that I was a poor hermit. When in the baptistry I required, according to the rules, the god-fathers and god-mothers to stretch their hands upon the children, I was careful to keep my own hand, which ought also to be laying on in the same manner, the farthest from that of the god-mother. Sometimes, either by chance, or by trick or malice on their part, mine met her's. I then suddenly withdrew it, and put it in another place, where it would be safer. On one of those occasions a pretty god-mother amused herself in inflicting this sort of torture upon me. Three times in the space of a few minutes her hand encountered mine, when it was each time suddenly withdrawn. I saw her smiling secretly, and it may be easily conceived how angry I was. The occasion of avenging myself taking place, I took advantage of it. One or two months after this trick of hers, which seemed to amuse her much more than me, she attended a marriage of one of her friends. I recognized my fair mischievous foe in the vestry, where, after the ceremony, every body came to sign the register. All except her had written their names; she alone seemed inattentive. "Miss," said I to her in a serious tone, "you would be eager enough to sign your name if it were your own marriage." At such an apostrophe the whole company laughed at her, and she, deeply blushing, hesitated a little to partake of

the general mirth. While every body was going out, she came near to me, and said—"It is not right, Sir; you avenge yourself, you remember the *previous baptism*."

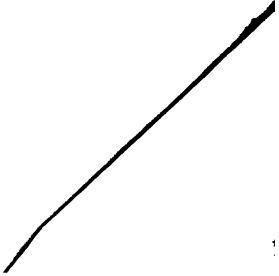
On another occasion M. was to be a god-mother. At this news I tried every means to avoid discharging this office; but I was obliged to submit myself. At the baptistry I found myself facing this person, whom I feared quite as much as I loved. My head became dizzy, my embarrassment was visible. I did every thing wrong. I was like one beside himself, whom reason has deserted. Thanks to the beadle, to the vestry-keeper, to the boys, I performed my office as I could. It is customary in many dioceses in France for god-fathers and god-mothers to present the vicar with a paper of sugar-plums, in which rich people always wrap among the sweetmeats some pieces of gold or of silver. This perquisite is a good income for vicars in the cities. According to this custom she gave me a fine paper of sugar-plums, with seven Napoleons wrapped in a billet, in which she told me that this money was to buy a cloak for me, because I never wore any. "It is," said she, "a feeble sign of gratitude for your good councils in confession."

To wear a cloak given by so dear a hand would have been very agreeable to me; but it would have burned me as the poisoned robe of Dejanira burned Hercules. I answered her, that I was grateful for her kindness, and should accept the gold provided she left me free to use it as I pleased. She assented to it, and I gave it to the poor.

Nothing was more painful to me than the performance

of the marriage ceremony. It was the real punishment of Tantalus. On those occasions I felt more deeply what I had lost only by my foolishness. I had before my eyes the picture of a happiness to which I could not aspire without a *crime*. Was it possible for me, in spite of all my fanaticism, piety, and mysticism, to silence my heart, to stop its beatings? Was it possible for me not to feel my desolateness?

After the ceremony I usually retired by myself into a corner of the choir, when all had gone out, to make my thanksgiving; and here, plunged in an involuntary reverie, I forgot my prayers. The saddest reflections occupied my mind. I pictured to myself the happiness which might have been my lot on the earth had I not become a priest. I reflected that a life of enjoyment, of love, had been also possible to me; that in this hour, so bitter to me, there were many happy couples enjoying in a mutual affection the greatest blessing in this world; sitting at their own table, or round their hearth, with their children about them; that had not man deceived me, I also might have known this happiness, while now the mere idea of it was considered a crime sufficient to cause the loss of my soul. Oh! how I was crushed when to each of these reflections I was obliged to answer—"Poor madman! what dost thou think of? Cease devouring thy own entrails, cease to be the cannibal of thy heart! Thou hast voluntarily shut thyself out from life, do not add poison to thy sorrows."



## CHAPTER IX.

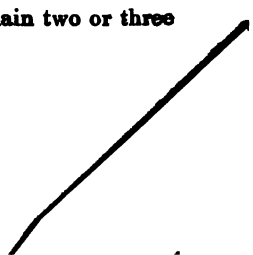
*Desperate resolution—I shut myself in the monastery of La Trappe—Mode of life—Awful mortifications—Prayers—Works—The old Trappist—The traveller Trappist—The father hostellier.*

AFTER many months of such a mode of life, and meditations of every kind, I came to a desperate resolution. The reading of extravagant lives of saints, who placed holiness in the most unnatural practices, had filled my poor head with designs more or less ridiculous. At length, being almost overpowered, fighting and tired of such miseries, I resolved upon going and shutting myself for ever in the monastery of La Trappe, a religious establishment under the most severe rules. This design seemed to be inspired by heaven, and I thought it would be a great sin not to follow it. I therefore wrote to my bishop, whose leave I wanted for resigning my station. At first he answered that my duty was to remain where Providence had assigned to me my post; but upon renewed applications he yielded to my importunities. By this way, and setting out from the city where I had so many dear acquaintances, I hoped to get rid of my sad attachment. I hoped to find peace and rest in the solitude of the monastery, to tame and crush my body for ever by means of the cruel penances of mortification. Thus I

sacrificed all my hopes in this world to my vows, to duty, to virtue ; or, at least, to what I deemed to be such.

I left without taking leave of any body, and went to this solitary establishment, far distant from our town. At first I remained a novice, to try my vocation. Here I am then, a Trappist, living in a manner which I cannot better describe, than saying it is the savage life in common. The day when you go in, you say farewell to the world : you are dead to it, the world is dead to you. Family, kinsmen, father, mother, brother and sister, are nothing any longer to a Trappist : he never sees them more, never hears of them, dead or alive. Only when the *Superior* learns the death of some kinsman of a monk, he says in the evening prayer, "Brethren, let us pray for the father or mother (as the case may be) of one of us, who has died a few days since." And each of them remains for ever under the weight of this awful uncertainty.

The first requirement of the order is an absolute silence, an eternal silence, broken only in the confession of sins. When they want any thing, they ask it by sign ; meat is banished from the house ; eggs, butter, and milk almost the whole year : they eat only the worst vegetables boiled, and with the worst oil only : they drink either water or sour beer ; they never wear linen, but woollen shirts on the bare skin and sleep upon planks ; or hard straw beds with their clothes on. At midnight, or at one or two, according to the degree of the feasts, they rise to go to the church, where they remain two or three



hours without fire, standing, kneeling, and singing. Afterwards they sleep some hours, and return to the chapel and to work. Almost the whole year it is fasting. These men, working hard all the morning, and singing a part of the night, breakfast only at twelve on the worst food, which beggars would disdain. The afternoon passes away in such occupations as the morning. I do not detail all the mortifications; kissing the ground, tearing their body with a whip, wearing hair-cloth, &c. I will only say that it is a duty to mortify one's human frame, in all its most natural wants or desires, by means of the most cruel and stupid practices.

Such was the kind of life I had embraced, such were the men with whom I was mixed. Among those thousand mortifications, the heaviest to me was the dirtiness resulting from the absence of linen, and the vermin which consequently established their abode in our skin. But as I never wanted reasons to justify the most nonsensical ideas, I imagined that even those vermin would be changed into as many diamonds in the next world.

Here true Christian humility requires this avowal, that I was not the first inventor of those wonders. No; I only imitated some saints whose ideas I adopted. The reading in so many legends of their far-famed exploits had spoiled my poor head, as novels and romances sometimes spoil the mind and the heart of young people.

But vainly had I shut the door upon the world, vainly had I fled; according to the counsel of the Gospel I was always the same man; I could not fly from myself. I

soon judged myself unworthy of living with such holy men; for such they were in general, if holiness consists in destroying one's nature, and in dirtiness. I judged them dead to themselves, to their body. But after some days, when I had time to look around me, what was my astonishment at seeing them undergoing the same struggles as myself! So true it is, as says Horace :

"Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurrit"—

"Expel nature with a pitchfork, she will nevertheless return."

I saw (and I could not help shuddering through pity) those fair Trappists perambulating the long and gloomy corridor, enwrapped in their white gowns, going to the chapel in the night, like shadows or corpses much more than like living beings; under those skeletons bubbled up human passions, beat one human heart; under those bald, whitened, snowy skulls, burned, and groaned, and roared an horrible Vesuvius. *Its eruptions* were more awful than I *could or will say*.

I had not been a fortnight in this abode, before I saw clearly that all would be useless, and that as well in the convent of La Trappe as in the world, I should be a restless and wretched man. During my residence I was witness to the death of an old Trappist, who had passed all his life in the convent. Forced by the French revolution to leave his garb and house, he went to Ireland, kept as he could his observances; and when, after the concordat, religious houses and convents were opened again, he came back to his former dwelling, where he

was now dying. We ranged ourselves, as usual in such cases, around him. Through humility he was lying on the floor of his cell, unwilling to die even in a straw bed. He begged our pardon for scandal, or any bad examples he might have given us; and asked our prayers for his last fight with the wicked angel, as he said. He received the sacrament and the extreme unction piously, and he breathed his last breath without any effort.

We brought ourselves his corpse to the grave in the church-yard, which lies precisely in the middle of the building, always in our sight. A dug grave is at hand for the first dying Trappist. We deposited him in his last dwelling, where he found at length rest and peace. His fate seemed to me very enviable.\*

\* A short story of a London paper will enlighten my accounts of La Trappe, and show their accuracy, at least for the *silence*. Thus runs the story:

A monk of the order of La Trappe, in France, was brought before Alderman Cowan by a police officer, under the following circumstances:

The poor Trappist had been wandering about Tower Hill and its neighbourhood the preceding night, with all the evidence of starvation about him, but without uttering a syllable of complaint, or soliciting the smallest assistance. At length he stretched himself in as private a place as he could find, and was perceived by a Jew, in whose breast was lodged the heart of a true Samaritan. The Jew, whose name was Knight, shook the stranger, and asked him whether he had no lodging to go to. The Monk answered by a shrug and a ghastly look, that fully disclosed the condition of his purse; *not a word* did he utter.

The Jew was requested to mention what he had ascertained of the poor man.

Mr. Knight stated, that having been born in France, he soon discovered that the melancholy being he had picked up was a country-

Among other Trappists, the father hostellier (who is charged with the reception of strangers) struck me by

man of his own, and had been brought up under the *silent system*, and was very likely to perish under the starving system. It was a strange mode of recommending a man's self to the notice of the author of all good to slight and reject the use of the gifts and faculties which he has been pleased to dispense. But so it was with the votaries of La Trappe, by the presiding authority of which the skeleton-like stranger was sentenced to do penance, by a pilgrimage through England and Ireland, for some transgression of the rules of the order. Witness took the monk home, and placed before him the best food that could be afforded; but the wretched man would take but little refreshment, and refused to lie down upon any other bed than the hard floor, where he consigned himself once more to sleep, but not until he had fervently prayed for mercy, as was evident from his heavy sighs, uplifted hands, and moving but soundless lips. Next morning witness ascertained that his guest had left a change of clothes at some public house in the neighbourhood of London bridge, and had been two days looking for the place without effect.

Alderman Cowan said that the conduct of the person who had relieved the poor enthusiast was truly noble. Many he feared, who were in the habit of reviling the Jews, "passed on the other side."

Mr. Hobler. Did you tell him that you were a Jew?

Mr. Knight. No; I was afraid that, deplorable as his condition was, he would have scorned my aid if I had said a word about that.

Mayley, the police-man, was then directed by Mr. Alderman Cowan to inquire in the public houses in the neighbourhood of London bridge whether the monk had deposited his clothes in any one of them. In the course of the day the officer returned, having succeeded in his charge. Wrapped up in his thread-bare garments were the works of Origin, Kempis, and other eminent writers of the Christian religion; and the poor monk for the first time appeared to relax, and something like a gleam of satisfaction was observable for a moment on his countenance when the books were put into his hands. He then bowed to the alderman, meekly placing his hands upon his breast, shook his benevolent host by the hand, and once more set out on his pilgrimage.

his look ; his eyes were brilliant, his features noble, his carriage majestic ; he was to make me acquainted with the rules of the house. Blessed be Providence which put such a good man in my way. His kindness, learning, much above that of a Trappist, knowledge of the world and of the human heart, his own misfortunes, bound me to him very closely. We became friends—unhappiness looks for unhappiness, and is only fitted to understand it. We wanted each other. One day, in one of those communicative moments so delightful to a human burdened heart, he forgot the rules of the monastery, and related to me his history. I scarcely ever in my life heard a more pitiful relation. “I hoped,” said he, “to find some remedy to despair which seized upon me. Methought that among those men of God I should enjoy peace and tranquillity. But, as says Solomon, ‘all is vanity.’ Catholicism forbids suicide, but it gives leave to destroy one’s self by means of mortification ; yea, this is considered a virtue. I will profit by this leave, and practise this virtue. Soon, I hope, I will be in the bosom of God. There is my only refuge, the only refuge of a *Catholic priest*. But for you, this is my counsel :—Go back to your ministry, your residence here avails nothing, *believe my experience* in the same matter ; in the world you may be useful ; here useless. Go, perform your duties, *teach the ignorant, teach virtue*. You have already made a vow imprudent enough when you embraced priesthood ; do not load yourself further by the vow of a Trappist. I wish I could have received the same advice before becoming a priest.”

His history astonished me, by showing the striking conformity of human hearts; his counsels, which I did not expect from a Trappist, made a deep impression on my mind. But I remained yet some days. In the meanwhile, one of my brothers hastened to the convent as soon as he learned my residence. He remonstrated so strongly with me, that I promised to him to leave the house when I could. My health, also, had quickly decayed more than before, under so hard a penance; and, in short, this last circumstance was given as an obstacle to my longer remaining. It was really painful to me to leave here my unhappy friend, above all, knowing his feelings and uneasiness. He said to me when I set out, "Farewell, dear brother; had I not pronounced my vows of living here till death, perhaps I would go with you; your friendship would be a relief to me, your departure is the most painful blow I have received since my entrance. Your absence will leave me in the same desert as before. Farewell!" and he pressed me in his attenuated arms, "be happy—think of me—pray for the Trappist: we will meet again, all in heaven, where we shall be allowed to love every body without crime." I set out heart-broken. I took again my situation, that was not yet filled by another priest, and all things went on as before.

## CHAPTER X.

*My only consolation is in my faith—I believe firmly all the Catholic tenets—My ignorance—Doubts respecting my religion seize upon me—My struggles to keep my faith—My sufferings—My terrible fights against myself—The young virtuous Priest.*

ALTHOUGH my existence was a heavy burden, I found in the resources of my faith an immense consolation and a powerful compensation. All the ridiculous superstitions of Popery, so much like the inventions of Mythology, had completely bewitched me. My faith was so tender, my conviction so deep, so true, my love of my religion and zeal for its glory so ardent and burning, that all that was a blessing to me. Who be to the man without any conviction! And I was yet destined to this condition. I found an inexpressible delight in saying mass, thinking that I kept my Saviour in my own hands, I ate him, and gave him to others in communion; in reciting my breviary and conversing with God; in attending the bed of the dying people; in short, all the occupations of my ministry. Amidst the struggles of my heart there was a kind of satisfaction to my self-love in vanquishing myself; in saying to myself, after a long day or gloomy night of sad reflections and regrets—"Hitherto I am faithful; I do all that I

think right ; if I am wrong, at least God sees my good intentions. 'The spectacle of a man engaged with adversity, is worthy of heaven,' said an old philosopher. God, indeed, is just, and he will reward my perseverance ; for it is written in the book of Revelations, 'those who are pure shall follow the Lamb.' " I was encouraged by this thought,—that gold is purer when it has passed through the fire.

But I was doomed to pass through another much more awful ordeal. The doubt, the horrible and freezing doubt, respecting my religion awaited me ; entwined with the former persecutor round me, they devoured me like the two serpents of Laocoon.

Hitherto my faith had been pure and entire. If some clouds of doubt arose in my mind, the sun of truth quickly dispersed them ; and I enjoyed peace on this score. The first time I cast a glance of distrust upon my belief, my soul was seized with an unutterable pang ; a poisoned arrow penetrated my bosom, drank up my life, and gnawed my vitals. Previous to this suspicion I had always practised this lesson, that I had two enemies to fight against ; my body, the foe of purity, and my reason, the great foe of my faith. I had made it my study, my duty, to trample on both ; the former by mortification and penances of every description, the latter by blindness. Hitherto I had never had in thought that there was the least chance or possibility of error in my belief. Hitherto my miserable life had been that of an oyster closely shut up in its shell. I had never made any use

- of my reason, never allowed her any liberty ; never listened to any difficulty or objection against her doctrines. In my eyes it was the height of crime. In order to give neither to my body nor to my reason the power of revolting against me, I had loaded both with the heaviest burthens. My whole day, yea, a considerable part of my nights, were filled with exercises of piety ; they allowed me no time to breathe ; my meditations, prayers, mass, breviary, beads, reading of piety, confession, theology, &c. &c. occupied all my hours ; and thus I walked, fettered and loaded like that stubborn animal which carries its burthen under the whip of its master without looking either to the right or to the left. I had been so enslaved by those imposed exercises, that if by chance some uncommon occupation prevented me from performing them in the day, I fulfilled them in the night ; and I did not go to bed till all my beads were told. Although I was so slavish, there were, however, some articles in my faith which had troubled me, because they contradicted natural feeling ; for example, the eternal damnation of children dead without baptism. Having lost a little brother who had not received this sacrament, it was very painful to me to believe that this poor dear soul was for ever deprived of the sight of God ; but this and some other revoltings of my reason, or rather of my heart, I smothered directly by this terrible answer : "The Church has said it ; an anathema to the man who contradicts the Church." Such had been my education, that it is often a mystery to myself to understand how I could get rid of my superstitions.

In the profound darkness created round me by the continual reading and meditation in such books as "*La Prê Spirituel, La Guide des Pêcheurs, La Perfection Chrétienne de Rodriguez, Dens, Sanchez,*" the pure and beneficent light of the Bible had never shone upon me. I had read it, indeed, but with a certain self-denial, with the pusillanimity of a boy who fears to go out of prescribed limits; and with this capital dogma of the Catholic Church—"It is not the particular mind of a Christian which must judge, but the Spirit of the Church." If, therefore, I found in the Bible some passages which did not agree with my creed, I immediately, without examination, condemned my reason. I sought refuge against my interpretations in the bosom of my Church, exclaiming—"I believe, O God, as thy holy Catholic Church teaches, and all that she teaches."

There is nothing at all astonishing in this my disposition to any one who knows human nature, to any one who knows that our mind is formed by our teachers. Napoleon has said, with his usual genius, that "the mind as well as the body was the work of one's mother." I had lost my mother too early; she was replaced by ignorant and superstitious teachers, who from my boyhood formed my mind like their own, that I might be, like them, a professed holy minister of the altars.

Such were my dispositions. I was enslaved, blind, ignorant, worshipping my creed, unable even to suppose that there was truth out of my doctrine; Popery being, according to its own dictum, inspired by the Holy Ghost.

On one occasion doubt and distrust seized upon me. I was one evening reading my New Testament, gazing with rapture and tears on the divine words of our Saviour, and I could not restrain tears of love at that matchless discourse before the last supper, when I believed I heard inwardly a voice saying to me that I misunderstood the Scriptures. I started, and left the holy book, unable to read any more. From this hour I became as if possessed by a spirit which I cannot define. Sitting at my side, it pursued me day and night, and did not leave me a moment at rest. I thought I heard at every instant the same voice which told me I was in error, and the sneers of this spirit laughing at me and at my pious exercises.

I had recourse to my spiritual weapons,—the sign of the cross, acts of faith, elevations of my heart towards God, the use of holy water,—to drive away the Devil as I thought. I read again and again my theology, and all my books of piety. Was it not looking for light in the midst of darkness, poor ignoramus that I was? I examined my conscience to know if I had not committed some enormous crime deserving such terrible temptations; but after all my search I found nothing. I consulted my confessor, to whom I related my sufferings and my doubts. Alas! my confession was Hebrew to him; he did not understand me, he knew not what was a doubt about his faith, he had never made any use of his reason. I thought him a saint, but his holiness was a very singular one; he said his mass, breviary, beads, as if he had made a material

work, mechanically, and with no more reflection than when he ate or drank. Such was the holy man to whom I opened my heart, hoping to obtain some relief, some help to my faith. But he answered—"You have always odd ideas. Some months ago you told me that in confession you were become a lover of a young lady; to-day you say you have no longer your faith. It is not possible; childishness, childishness all that; do not think of it. We are too happy to be born in the Catholic Church, which, by the assistance of God, rules our belief." He gave me some penance, to pray, to fast, to kiss the floor of my room before going to bed, and so dismissed me.

I was thus reduced to my own resources, and I found myself in an indescribable state of mind. To love God with all the strength of one's soul, to desire to serve him according to his will; to have been fifteen years learning, studying, and devouring what was believed to be truth, and after all to doubt if it be not false; to worship truth, and not be able to make a step towards it without fear of damnation; to be imprisoned, shut up in a narrow circle, out of which it is not possible to go without drawing down all the thunders of the Church; to be compelled to doubt whether one's creed is not absurd, and to have at the same time the conviction that the shadow of a doubt is a mortal sin, deserving all the fires of hell; to wish to believe, and yet not to be able to do so; to feel that each article, one after another, is uprooted from one's mind by a superior strength, and to make the

most violent exertions to retain them, as a man drawn between four horses gathers all his power to resist ; to do all in one's power to answer objections, to remove doubt, and yet not be able to find any means nor any good answer ; to feel that one loses God, heaven, truth, one's own soul, and to have no friendly bosom into which one can open one's mind and unburden its pains and suffering ; such was my situation.

The traveller who, upon awaking, finds himself surrounded on every side by a thousand rattlesnakes, gives a just idea of my anguish. Like him I did not dare to make the slightest motion for fear of excommunication ; I thought that I sinned each hour, that I deserved the curse of God, sometimes for my creed, sometimes for my doubt. At length I deemed that he had forsaken me entirely, and that I was a prey to the devil.

In the meanwhile it was necessary to act, and, in spite of all my fears, to fulfil my functions ; to say masses ; to confess ; and I was, by my very doubt, in a mortal sin, while those functions require a perfect purity of conscience under pain of damnation. Oh ! what did not I suffer when I ascended the altar for the first time in this desperate disposition of mind ! I am astonished how the frame of a man can bear such an ordeal and not sink. Arrived at the foot of the altar, I became almost beside myself ; I was blind, not knowing what I said nor what I did. Gazing at the crucifix before me, at the chalice, at the wafer, with a species of imbecility. But when the consecration arrived, when I was to pronounce

the sacramental words, "hoc est corpus meum,"—"this is my body," I hesitated, not daring to utter them. I wished to stop there or pass over them; but the fear of another sin, called superstition (because the assistant people would have worshipped a mere wafer not changed into the body of Christ, for want of the words of consecration), determined me to pronounce them. I did pronounce them; but I thought firmly that the earth was going to be opened to swallow me. I started an instant in awful expectation; I thought I saw the demon rejoicing at my profanation of the body and blood of our Saviour; hissing upon me as his prey after this crime, I heard, in imagination, the cries of triumph of the infernal court, while the celestial court wept for my profanation; I heard Christ reproaching me for my hardness of heart for crucifying him again; I condemned myself as more cruel than the Jews; I saw the crucifix bleeding; all was bloody around me. I lost my senses, and I cannot say whether or not I recited the prayer of the remainder. I found myself after mass, in the sacristy, wet through with the perspiration; my cassock, alba, all my sacerdotal dresses were wet. I said I was sick, and I went to bed. Such is the story of my first mass after my doubt, but the words are far—very far from describing the reality. On the following day it was to begin again almost in the same manner, except some little varieties, in the administration of all the sacraments. I did not yet reject my creed; had I done it,

I should not have suffered ; but I could neither reject it nor believe it, as it was my duty ; hence my tortures.

From this time the whole aspect of nature was changed to me. A mournful, visionary light seemed to overspread its cheerful face ; all my actions became poisoned, bitter, sinful, guilty. I had not a breath, I did not speak a word, in which I saw not a crime. The demon became my inseparable companion ; it sat at my side every where—at table, in my room, in my confessional ; it was in my bed when I slept, it mounted to the altar with me. I saw it every where ; at each instant my imagination showed it to me coming to seize upon me, and I shivered inwardly. The Romans and Greeks had placed their divinities in lakes, meadows, roads ; but my superstition, on the contrary, peopled all those places with demons. In the fine south of France, where the skies are so beautiful, above all the skies of the evening, so varied, so red, so brilliant, I saw in those clouds, shaded with red and blue colours, only the fires of hell, only devils looking at me, threatening me, and laughing sneeringly at me. I said to myself, sadly and desperately, “It is then finished. I am banished from Paradise ; beautiful heaven ! I shall never possess thee.”

This state was not to be sustained. I tried to ameliorate it, but vainly. Lying upon a bed of torture, as the Psalmist says, I had nobody to make it. I turned and turned myself upon my gridiron, and on every side it was the same suffering. Each day I waited for the rise of the daybreak of truth, and I remained always in profound

darkness. I sought for a guiding-thread in this labyrinth, and my researches were fruitless. I was wandering in this despairing wilderness of doubt, alone, without comfort or refreshment; on an unfathomable and boundless sea, without compass or star to direct my course. I was continually the sport of my fanaticism, which fermented in my head. A perpetual voice resounded in my ears, calling me heretic, impious priest, reproaching me with the benefits of God and the bad use thereof. Then I took my Bible, but from which I dared not yet draw all the utility that it should have afforded to me. I knelt, I kissed it piously. "Thou art," said I to it, "the very Word of God himself; thou comest not to mislead me; speak to me, reveal to me the truth, enlighten my mind, that I may understand thee."

Although my prejudices deprived me of a great deal of its benefits, I felt a great calm in reading those sacred pages. I felt that here, and only here, was truth, if truth was upon earth. I put this book in my bosom as a preventative against doubt, temptation, and the Devil; but spoiling this rational idea by some superstition. I put also a small vial of holy water, a little bag of relics, and some images of my patrons tied upon my breast with my scapulary. All this gave me some assurance against my fiends, but of course did not free me from them.

One of my most painful sufferings was the necessity I underwent of concealing myself from my coarse and ignorant fellow priests, who would have laughed at me because they cared no more about truth than about error.

Provided they had plenty of food and wine, they left the world to go on in its own way, as they said. There was, however, a young vicar of twenty-four years of age, not yet corrupted by their intercourse, one of the most benevolent and tender hearts it was ever my lot to meet with. I loved him as a brother, and revered him as a saint. He guessed my sufferings without knowing their nature. One day he told me—"Mr. —, I should have thought I deserved better your confidence. Why do you not trust me with your pains? Are you unaware that friendship is a boon of heaven, and that it reveals itself in misfortune?" His kindness, more striking yet by the hardness of others, won my heart; but he was so happy in his faith, his love of God, his purity of soul, that I respected his happiness; I feared to cause him to lose his tranquillity in communicating to him the contagion of my doubt and misfortune. I told him that my pains were of such a nature as to be revealed but to God, and I recommended myself to his prayers. Hence he came every day to my room, trying to draw me from my musing and melancholic mood. In fact, his innocence, his childish candour, his gaiety and virtue, were to me a source of blessing. Most excellent priest! thou wilt never hear of this book; but I deposite here my heartfelt thanks for thy kind friendship. God forbid that thy intercourse with thy unworthy fellows should have sullied thy amiable virtues.\*

\* This same estimable young priest, a few days after his arriving in our city, said to me, with tears in his eyes—"Oh! Mr. —, could

## CHAPTER XI.

*My indecision between faith and doubt—Temptations like those of St. Paul and Luther—They prevent me sleeping—Dreadful nights—I nearly fall into despair—I think I am abandoned by God.*

Doubt concerning my faith found a new strength in my heart on account of my attachment to M——, for if Popery is false, said I, my vows are void; consequently I could marry her, if not in France, since the civil laws prevent priests from marrying, yet at least in another country. I had remained already for many weeks in that state. I felt from day to day that there was a mental *operation* to make, that I might be cured, but I feared it so much that I did not dare to think of it. I was like a man who is devoured by an awful evil, of which he cannot be delivered but by the saw of a surgeon. This operation of which I speak, was for me to examine my faith once for all, to put aside all those drosses which had stained and filled my mind, and afterwards make a choice with the Bible, and admit only what it contained. But it required a long time, a long struggle, before I could come to this resolution. I passed day after day shaking my burthen sometimes, making vows to be delivered of it. Inwardly I was attached to those practices and supersti-

you believe that I have found in confession a young girl who is the mistress of a priest? Is it possible?" He could not conceive that; poor young man!

tions to which I had been accustomed for fifteen years. What! said I, is it possible that God has left me in error so long; me who sought for truth, after such long study and reading of the Bible, theology, and pious books, can I be in error? No, it cannot be. Then it is a temptation. Let us drive it away; and I made new attempts to resume my former faith.

I had read in their lives the awful sufferings of François de Sales, a virtuous man although a Catholic bishop, who, believing firmly that he was doomed for ever to be lost, said to God: "Let me love thee upon earth, since I shall neither see nor love thee in the next world." The struggles of Saint Louis, a king of France, whose superior genius revolted sometimes against his faith. Of Luther himself, whom our Catholic books represent as a madman and possessed by the devil, but who, in reality, in a situation like mine, had experienced so keen and so long an anguish that he could neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep during the fights of his reason against superstition. I had read those words of St. Paul: "*Datus est mihi angelus Satanae qui me colaphizet; Ter Dominum—rogavi qui respondit mihi; sufficit tibi gratia mea. Virtus in infirmitate perficitur,*" (2 Corinth. xii. 7.) "There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me . . . . for this thing I besought the Lord thrice . . . . and he said unto me: my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."\*

\* In comparing those two translations I perceive a great difference.

Popery explains those words by carnal temptations, but wrongfully ; I understood fully this passage when I suffered the same temptations as this great Apostle. As St. François, I thought God had forsaken me ; as Luther, I could believe no more ; as St. Paul, I besought God to be delivered ; and I said with Christ, "Oh ! my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?"

After remaining for whole hours in this hard occupation of reconciling all the absurdities of my faith, of investing with some appearance of common sense my inconceivable and contradictory mysteries, my prodigious exertions made my blood ferment and boil and flow towards my head with such a violence that I feared in earnest it would burst. My heart was in an alarming agitation, in palpitations like those of an aneurism ; my head like a volcano. In my inability to find any reason or truth in the principal tenets of Popery, a horrible despair took possession of me. Sometimes I was tempted through this despair to abjure God, to curse my religion, my vows, the priesthood, and myself. I had a mind to relinquish my situation, and to go to a foreign country where I should not be known : in short, to go out of this place of torment. Sometimes I even thought of suicide, of laying down the heavy burthen of life. But I was always restrained by the fear of God. Soon after, those symptoms of delirium produced by an excessive application of mind subsided, and I was ashamed of myself. I fell on my knees. I besought God to have pity on my weakness, to forgive me, to enlighten me, to strengthen me,

that I might be a good priest. To this storm succeeded a little calm, for nature is not able to endure long such an excitement: that which is extreme cannot last long. But the next day, indeed the same evening, my struggles were to begin again. Is this, I ask it, is this to live?

I had heard of the awful temptations of the fathers of the church, of St. Jerome especially, who in the wilderness of Thebaid remembered the women of Rome. I suffered also this temptation, but it was nothing in comparison to those which assault the mind. But when they were both joined against me, it was then that my life was truly a horrible suffering; when my head and my heart were at the same time attacked by those powerful fiends created and raised against me by the Catholic institutions.

The agony I underwent in the night was yet more terrible; for the benefit of the light in day is a blessing to unhappy men: I never saw the approach of darkness without an involuntary shudder; hereupon my fellow curates said, laughing—"This priest is always gloomy at supper." If by a cruel chance I met often in the evening service M——, either in the church or in the confessional, or at the door in going out from the meeting, the sight of her revived all my sad attachment, and followed me, engraved in my eyes and heart, to my room.

If I cast my eyes to ask the succour of God upon my crucifix, or the images of saints hanging on the walls of my room, by a singular effect of imagination it was not the features of saints I saw, but her's. If I took my

breviary to find a refuge in prayer, her very name was placed involuntarily on my lips among my mumbled legends; those ideas gave occasion to new doubts of a religion which interdicted to me so natural a feeling. Vainly I sought for shelter from my pains in sleep, this benefit allowed by Providence to the most unhappy men. But alas! how could I compose my head, given up to doubt, and suffering under its terrible weight, or my wounded heart? Sleep had fled from my eyelids. Sleep, indeed, is a sweet thing for little children, who dream but of paradise and of innocent pleasure; for the unhappy man, who finds in this succour of God the oblivion and suspension of his evils; for the Christian, whose heart enjoys the satisfaction of having truly loved God and fulfilled his duty; but for the Catholic priest, who knows or imagines that he offends reason, nature, and his Creator, there is no sleep. As for me, I had lost it; for I cannot call so that heavy and painful numbness which, after a long struggle and the abasement of all energy in me, fell upon my limbs, and filled my brain with horrible dreams during the hours of night. What had become of the sleep of my early childhood, which a mother lulled with her songs, this calm restorer of the existence of man spread over mind and limbs? This peaceful breath, I had lost it for ever. When Nature, tired by her exertions, plunged me into a kind of drowsiness, my thoughts of the day were revived with a wonderful violence, and my dreams were impressed with a frightful character of truth. Each phantom conjured up by the nightmare was

a clear allegory of the sufferings of my soul. Sometimes I dreamt I was called to the tribunal of God, who addressed to me all the reproaches which my own conscience addressed to me during the day. "Thou hast disfigured my Gospel and sullied my Word. Thou hast misled men. At every hour I speak to thee, I warn thee of thy errors, and thou refusest to listen to me." Confused and frightened, I could find no word of defence; and the terror which seized me would awaken me.

Sometimes I dreamt I was on the very instant of pronouncing again my vows. The horror excited in me by this idea was so violent, that I would raise myself suddenly in my sleep, and cry with all my might—"No! no! never; rather die!" My fellow priests found me in this state without understanding the cause of this excitement.

I descended pale and mournful, seeking with an eager eye a feeble ray of hope, and being able to find along the way only red and living fires.

Sometimes an awful spectre appeared again and again, and seized me in its livid arms. I fought against it, I implored it; I was shaken, tormented by this relentless phantom, till I awoke, perspiring and breathless. The impression was so strong, so stamped upon my mind, that after awaking I thought I saw it again. I deemed that the Devil took this form to persecute me, for I had read the same things in the far-famed temptations of the Catholic Saint Antoine, who saw many times the Devil attacking him under every shape. Awake, I used my spiritual

arms, especially the holy water ; with it I made many crosses upon myself, and sprinkled my bed. But my weapons were laughed at by the phantom which appeared again, sneering at my fright ; and I could not get rid of it but by leaving my room.

I went down to the garden to dissipate my illusions. I walked here like a phantom myself, in an awful state of doubt, of temptation, of unbelief, gazing at the sky which told me of the grandeur of God. What ideas overpowered my mind ! This magnificent view of the glory of the Lord increased my difficulties ; for when I asked myself—"Can the Creator of those wonders be contained in a wafer ?" I dared not answer. Then descending to the nothingness of man, I said—"Is it possible that this poor and pitiful being can create God every day ?" My reason was overpowered and turned.

My eyes remained attached steadfastly to the stars, looking for that which should guide me to the truth, as the star which led the Magi to the new-born Saviour. But alas ! the guiding light did not appear ; my spirit wandered while interrogating those stars, of which Plato says beautifully, that our souls are detached sparkles, which hereafter shall be re-united again.

How many times has the daybreak surprised me thus walking and dreaming, infringing the law imposed by night upon every creature ! It was during those awful nights that I was a prey to the most horrible temptations. The thoughts, much more wearying than it is possible to imagine, fermented in my brain. There were some nights

when I was so tired fighting and reflecting, when the hope of salvation shone so feeble and so distant, that I was tempted to look no farther than this world. "Well," said I to myself, "let us live while we may; let us not think any more of those matters which are beyond my reach; be a man since thou canst not be an angel. Why should I consent to be cut off from the joys of life in the vain expectation of a doubtful futurity? Other people are happy; I am the only being whose heart and mind suffer so much; my fellow priests, they are joyous and tranquil; every body enjoys at this hour the soft rest which nature imparts to them. Why am I here alone, awake and tormented?" Afterwards, turning my eyes to the state of Catholicism, I said—"Is not my religion dead? I am then a corpse living in a coffin, a corpse of a man tied to the ruin of a religion. I sacrifice my life, my rest, the person I love, my happiness, to a creed which is nothing. I take the shadow for the reality." When these thoughts had remained long in my mind I addressed God—"O God!" cried I to him, "where art thou, then, since thou leavest me a prey to such frightful uncertainty? There was a time when thou didst work miracles to sustain the trembling faith of men; thou didst send an angel to touch with a live coal the lips of Isaias; thou didst appear in the burning bush, in the golden cloud; thou didst comply with the will of Gideon; thou didst multiply miracles for the Jews, and to-day thou art deaf and indifferent to my vows and wants; thou knowest, however, that I pant only after truth, that I would embrace the religion which

will seem most true, and thou dost not help me ; thou dost not stretch thy hand to me ; thou dost not address to me a word of encouragement, to me who suffer and fight for thee." I was tempted to blaspheme. To find some relief, I tried to weep, but I could not ; my eyes were more dry than the wilderness of Zahara, where the dew never falls, and my heart was dryer than my eyes.

Such were my nights for a long time. The whole energy of my soul devoured itself ; the exterior effect of it was to wake up the body when all was asleep in nature, and oblivion seems prest upon existence. The melancholy clapper of a clock counted to me unmercifully each step I made towards eternity, the number of instants that the past time had already devoured for ever. How grave and solemn is that voice of time raising itself in the middle of the night as a cry of death, and which echoes from the sounding walls of living men's abodes, or from the tombs of the church-yard. How they struck me, and made me palpitate with anger and fright, upon my burning bed or in my solitary walks. "One more," thought I, "yet one portion of my existence is gone ; always lost hours falling into the abyss of the past without bringing that hour in which I will know truth." Thus were passed my nights with such reflections, and dreams in my sleep, if I can call it sleep ; for such a sleep abridges, exhausts life, rather than refreshes and recruits it. The work of thought, more fantastical, more deep in dreams, is also more violent and hard. The mind, struck with a stupid emotion or consternation, is tired for the whole day by

the useless exercise which it has undergone. Thus was my sleep. I suffered during the day for the disorder of my nights, and at night for the torment of my days.

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## CHAPTER XII.

*My temptations to Atheism—Tactics of Popery in putting truth and lies on the same level—I remain attached to my faith by the example of men of genius—This tie broken when I see my mistake—I get rid of all my superstitions—My joy—I study the Bible and philosophy—My delight, peace, and tranquillity—I leave my country.*

AFTER a long trial, long sufferings, and endeavours to get rid of such temptations against my faith, I saw my impotency. I was surprised and alarmed at finding myself seeking a shelter or a retreat in Atheism. For the Catholic Church, with her well-known swelling style, puts on the same level all her dogmas; says that they are all equally true, being all the real word of God, or the decision of his vicegerent, the Pope.

For example; the existence of God is no more certain than his real presence in the wafer; the divinity of Christ is no more certain than the utility of indulgences. Consequently, as I was able no more to admit the belief of indulgences or of the real presence in the wafer,

by a natural conclusion I had no reason to admit the other doctrines, which my Church said were of the same nature, for certainty.\* But this incredulity into which I fell by the violence of my temptations against my faith, this incredulity in which I sought for a shelter against those horrible interior sufferings and fights, was a remedy as bad, or rather worse, than the evil itself. The ground of Atheism burnt my feet. I wavered thus between a belief and an unbelief; plunging myself sometimes into Atheism, but coming out immediately like those men who plunge into the bosom of the sea to look for pearls, and are obliged to mount up to breathe. I tried to follow the old philosophy of the Academicians, and to doubt of every thing; that party seeming the most wise, and the most removed from error, since it admitted or denied nothing precisely. But this system could no more remain in my head.

The only tie which kept me yet somewhat to my former religion, was the consideration that many men of genius, whom I revered for their talents and works, believed without any difficulty (as I supposed) the same points that I condemned. But this tie was also happily broken. When I had ascertained that the leaders of the Catholic faith,

\* It was a very skilful tactic of Popery to give to its absurdities the same degree of certainty as to the greatest truths. A man who has some doubts about one of those innumerable inventions, is quickly encouraged by this thought, that all is equally true and indubitable; at the same time he is frightened at the idea of rejecting all, and he is obliged to swallow all. This was the design of the Church.

De La Mennais\* among others, a Catholic priest, had not a shadow of belief in Catholicism, the discovery of this fact, (which the priests keep as secret as possible, to sustain their Church with the authority of the name of this powerful writer,) achieved to open my eyes ; for I sought for truth sincerely, and I had strongly impressed on my mind this word of Christ, " Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

In this disposition, during my doubts and temptations, while my reason said to me—Is it possible that God can be such a ridiculous, cruel, absurd being, as he is represented by the Church ? Is it possible that the body of Christ can be at the same time every where, in Heaven, in a thousand places of the world, in the smallest part of a consecrated wafer no larger than the point of a pin, received and eaten a thousand times a day by every Catholic ? While, I say, my reason proposed to me those objections, I had always this last answer to give myself : " I cannot believe this perfectly, but greater geniuses than myself, such as La Mennais and others, believe it firmly."

\* This extraordinary man, one of the ablest writers among Catholics in the nineteenth century, the best bulwark of their faith, has lately been *interdicted* by his bishop and the Pope, on account, not of his unbelief, but of his *published* opinions. This is the reward for his many books published in behalf of Popery, which respects neither genius nor services so soon as one goes out of the little circle allowed to the human mind. The name of La Mennais was a few years ago, when I was in France, synonymous with father of the church, with Bossuet, with Augustine ; now it is that of an apostate, because he has had in politics and religion some daring ideas somewhat different from those of the Holy See.

But now this answer was no more to be admitted. At length I admitted this definite part.

After having knelt devoutly, I prayed to God heartily for a long time. I represented to him, with all simplicity, that I thought myself obliged to reject the faith I had kept for twenty years ; to look for another more conformable to my ideas of truth, of justice, and of himself. I braved, not without a terrible dread, the thunders of excommunication, which I heard rumbling over my head, and I rejected entirely all my articles. Some of them cost me very much to lay down ; for example, faith in the real presence of Christ in the host, in spite of all its impossibilities, had been to my simplicity a source of sweet delight while admiring his kindness towards mankind. I made a heap of all my formerly worshipped idols, and looking at them, I said pitifully to myself : " There is then what has tormented me so much and for so long a time. There is the burden, O Catholic Church ! which thou hast imposed upon me."

Thus I began to feel myself relieved from an immense load, and like a man who has been delivered of a mortified member which has tortured him for years. I began to breathe easily, to be born to the freedom of the sons of God.

My joy was great indeed, at having an end put to my awful temptations and doubts, but it was tempered by the regret of having lost so many years in acquiring those superstitions, and in filling my mind with them ; as an unhappy man who passes a long night in collecting gems,

as he thinks, but which he finds at daybreak to be but common pebbles.

There was now an incumbent duty on me to arrange another system of faith, different from that of the Roman Catholic Church. In this important matter I proceeded with all the care I could. My first error had cost me dear enough to give me some experience. I sought, above all, *truth in the Holy Bible* ; but the common vulgate, or its translation in French, were in many places accommodated to the Roman Catholic sense, and consequently I mistrusted them. I knew Greek and English enough to read the version of the Septuagint, and an English translation. I studied accurately those four bibles. In the mean while, as my mind had always been enslaved and blinded with scarce any idea of philosophy or religious discussion, I endeavoured to enlighten it by the reading of books which treat of such matters, not caring for the ecclesiastical censures which forbid their reading under pain of excommunication. I studied the philosophy of Locke, D. Stewart and Reid, lately translated into French, Descartes, Mallebranche, Cousin, Jeoffroy ; the immortal lessons of history by Guizot,\* then professor, now French state minister, in which, with an admirable

\* Guizot is a Protestant. During his ministry he has planted schools in every village, among ignorant peasants who had never heard of a book. France is indebted to him for his services in this cause. Thus it was necessary, in a Catholic country, that a protestant should be placed at the head of the ministry of public instruction to favour knowledge.

talent and moderate spirit, he exposes the true character of the Popish Church ; what I could gather from Luther, Melancthon, Zuingle, Calvin, men of whom I had so long been ignorant, and had slandered ; the immense Philosophical Dictionary of Bayle, the discussions of Bossuet and Jurieu, and many others.

After this hard but pleasing task, I found myself quite a different man. My mind, so long fettered, enjoyed delightfully its freedom ; it was transported to a new region ; it delighted in seeking truth, and when finding some just and receivable idea, it started and seized it ; it bathed itself deliciously in this ocean of truth, after having so long thirsted for the least drop of those refreshing waters without daring to look for it. I could then *read the Bible freely*, and without my former slavish fear of damnation if I departed from the Popish sense. In this incomparable book, *I felt* the divinity at each page. I heard a voice which I could not resist. My heart, thus deprived of its former yoke, was mollified by those heavenly dews, and I watered with my tears the sacred pages. How much then I despised that Church, which for eighteen years had deprived me of this mine of truth, in saying that it was to be read with caution, mistrust, and submission to the explanation of the pope. All my doubts were relieved by this passage, which I quote because it has been of more value to me than all my theological learning ; perhaps it will be also useful to the reader : “ *He that believeth in him, is not condemned ; but*

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*he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the only begotten Son of God."*

This was the corner-stone of the religious edifice on which I built; and now, finding myself, thanks to God, in the right road, without any doubt, having no more those horrible temptations and difficulties which had tormented me, and transformed my life into continual misery, I could no more teach the Catholic faith to the people. On the other hand, I could not remain in France. If I published my new faith, I should be dishonoured, *interdicted*, persecuted more than I had been hitherto; I should be pointed at by all the people among the fanatic Catholics of the South as an apostate. This, indeed, would have been nothing to myself; but to my brothers, sisters, and other kinsmen, who, owing to their own prejudices and the public opinion around them, would have thought themselves dishonoured, I made up my mind. I left a *fair* situation, bade adieu to my native country, and came among the Protestants and freemen of America.\*

\* When I set out for this country I deprived myself of the pleasure of saying farewell to any one; above all, to her who had been the source of so many sorrows to me. It was worse than useless to make her acquainted with my attachment to her, for had it been known, it would only have brought upon her dishonour, owing to the prejudices of the Catholics.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*The Confessional—Boldness and success of Popery—Essence of the Confessional—Its use with men in political matters—Continual relations of Priests with the female sex from their childhood—Abominable instruction—Impossibility of a young Priest's remaining uncorrupt in performing this office in its extent—The manner of entrapping women—The priests in confession rule the marriages of women—Stories—Abuses in confessing dying persons—Persecutions at the death-bed—Pleasant relations of devotees with their Confessor—The secret of the Confessional.*

To one who makes it a rule to reflect upon the nature of things, there is abundant matter for reflection. How has the Roman clergy obliged the world to kneel before it? Kings and emperors before one of their lowest subjects; beauty, purity, and loveliness, before an ignorant, coarse, and slovenly priest? How has the clergy obliged men and women, boys and girls, great and poor, to reveal all their most secret thoughts to a confessor? This fact alone is enough to show, in open light, what is Popery; to show its cunning, its strength, and its policy. But our astonishment will increase if we look at the nature of confession, if we dissect it with the scalpel of truth.

Three great principles and tenets are the essence of confession. The first is, *that the confessor is as God himself, whose place he holds*; the second is, *that nothing*

*must be hid from the confessor, because God knows all, and his vicegerent must also know all* ; the third is, *that a blind and most absolute obedience is owed to the confessor, as to God himself*. Hence it is easy to see that Popery, by an abominable substitution, makes man disappear as much as possible, and puts God himself in the place of man. This idea, once deeply impressed in the mind of boys, from their childhood strengthened by all the tenets of the Catholic Church in the confessional, in the Catechism, in discourses, in books of piety, &c. it is not astonishing that such respect, veneration, and obedience, are paid to the confessor. The Protestant who reads the history of my country will cease to gaze with surprise at those facts, (incredible, perhaps, to him,) of a confessor who orders his penitent to kill another man by the command of the Lord. When a confessor ordered the fanatic and deluded *Clement* to kill his king, Henry III., the order was from God. When *Damiens* stabbed Louis XV. the order was from God. When the confessor of Louis XIV. ordered him to revoke the edict of Nantes, the order was from God.

But it would be quite useless to give any more particular examples, since, according to the true spirit of confession, there is not a single crime which, looked at *in the light of theology*, cannot, must not, be advised and ordered by the confessor ; above all, for the advantage of the Catholic Church. When a man acts for this end, he *cannot* sin ; for, as it is said among priests, "*the end sanctifies the means.*" This is the key-stone to the Romish edifice ; and the priest, feeling his human weakness, has called

the name of God to his help, to strengthen his feebleness, to authorise his errors, to sanctify his crimes. Thus in old times, Lycurgus, Numa, and many others, derived their laws and powers from a divine source ; but no man, no power, no religion, has made so sacrilegious a use of this sacred word, God, as Popery ; no one has perpetrated so many crimes in this holy name. It is not my intention to repeat here all the accusations so justly made against Catholic priests, but only to reveal, to publish in the light, perhaps for the first time, how they defraud the poor deluded people who trust to them. I am bold to say aloud, that Protestants have nothing yet upon this important matter so precise as what I am about to say. I have confessed priests and laymen of every description, a bishop (once) superiors, curates, persons high and low, women, girls, boys. I am, therefore, fitted to speak of the confessional.

The confession of men is a matter of high importance in political matters, to impress their minds with slavish ideas ; but not to repeat what I have already stated on this subject in my discourse, I refer the reader to it. As for other matters, confessors endeavour to give a high opinion of their own holiness to fathers and husbands, that they may be induced to send to the confessional, without any fear, their wives and daughters. Because, doubtless, should fathers and husbands know what passes at the confession-box between the holy man and their wives and daughters, they never would permit them again to go to those schools of vice. But priests command most care-

fully to women never to speak of their confession to men, and they inquire severely about that in every confession.

The confession of the female sex is the great triumph, the most splendid theatre of priests. Here is completed the work which is but begun through all their intercourse with women; for all our relations with them begin from their birth and continue till their death. In their baptism we sprinkle their heads with holy water, at their death, their grave; and the space comprised between those two epochs is filled by a thousand ecclesiastical duties. The more I think of this matter, the more I remember this sentence—"Priests, in taking the vows of renouncing marriage, engage themselves to take the wives of others."

So soon as the first light of reason has appeared in their tender minds, we have girls at our confessional; and here, with all the resources of cunning and lessons of theology, we sow the seeds of our future power in their hearts, the foundation of our future designs. Those young girls from seven years of age come and kneel with all the innocence, the purity, the inexperience of childhood; beautiful as the lilies of the valley of which our Saviour speaks in the Gospel; they come sent by their mothers, by the orders of the priest, who watches his prey with eager eyes; they come with all the fears and respect of their age for the man of God. He, seeing in them the future tool of his passions, fills their minds with prejudices, repeats to them that he is the minister of heaven, that they must look to him, revere

him, almost worship him as a God ; he accustoms their mind to obey him absolutely and blindly, to believe him infallible ; in short, a divine oracle. Thus he gives to their thoughts the direction he pleases ; he prepares his batteries, he informs them upon subjects which they ought never to know. At first they do not understand those lessons at so early an age ; but by and by they bear their fruit, when developed by time. Thus confessors instruct those girls from seven, or even six years of age ; for the youngest are the best. At ten years old they come to the catechism. In those long instructions he explains diffusely, three or four times a week, the vileness and filthiness in that shameful book, which they learn by heart. As a preparation to the Lord's Supper at the end of their year of catechism, he confesses them much oftener than usual ; they make a general *review* of their whole life. When he gives them the absolution which purifies their conscience and reconciles them to God, he reveals to their mind what they owe to their confessor for such a favour. In the afternoon of this same day, at one of the most gorgeous ceremonies of the Catholic Church, the general communion of boys, the confessor, at the renovation of the vows of baptism, strictly commands them not to neglect the holy confession ; for if they do, they will be lost. Thus young girls, well indoctrinated and bound to their confessor, are not heedless enough to abandon his orders ; they come again to the confessional, through custom and habit, with the same simplicity, and entertaining the same respect and

fear of their spiritual father as in their childhood ; they kneel many times in the vestry, without the confessional, before a man inflamed with passions ; a man, perhaps, who has for a long time fought against himself, and who yet bears evil in his heart ; before a man, perhaps, who has long since prepared his work, and now is ready to profit by it ; before a man, honest and pure, perhaps, at first, but who, being a *man*, a son of Adam, may not be able to resist the temptation. And, I ask, is it possible, humanly speaking, for him, a priest, to remain pure, when at twenty-five or thirty years of age he is shut either in the vestry or in the confessional with a young woman who reveals to him the secrets of her heart as she knows them herself, according to our rules, so that he, the spiritual physician, may be able to *see and to judge* ; with a woman who, being herself human and not an angel, speaks for hours to a young priest of her temptations, her passions, her secret thoughts, &c. and conversing of matters which I cannot reveal here ;—I say, is it possible for human virtue to keep itself pure, not only for a day, a week, a month, but during years and for the whole life ?

Let not a Catholic say to me that these are the reasonings of a corrupt man, of a bad priest ; let him not say that God can do what man cannot, and other similar reasons which, *I know it well*, priests always give to explain their pretended virtue. Those reasons a common Catholic may be satisfied with ; but I, a priest, cannot be. No ; I cannot, I know too well the matter ; and I

answer, first, that I was no more inclined to evil, nor more liable to yield to temptation, than others; (for God knows that I never seduced any one through my ministry.) I was only a man like others, designed by the Creator for connubial happiness, according to his Word itself, "it is not good for man to be alone; I will make a help meet for him," designed, I say, for a union intended by the all-wise and benevolent Creator. Can the laws of Popery prevail over the wisdom of the Almighty? Let not a Catholic say that a priest in this situation is helped by the special grace of God, for I answer, by the words of Christ himself, "whosoever loves danger, he shall perish in it." And if God has promised his grace, it is not granted in an unnatural immoral situation, directly against his institution.

As soon as the young girl, for I speak peculiarly of their confession, enters the confessional, "Bless me, father," she says, kneeling and crossing herself, "for I have sinned;" and the priest mumbles, "Dominus sit in ore tuo et in corde tuo ut confitearis omnia peccata tua,"—"The Lord be in your heart and lips, that you may confess all your sins." If she is an ugly, common country girl or woman, she is soon despatched; but, on the contrary, if she is pretty and fair, the holy father puts himself at ease, he examines her in the most secret recesses of her soul, he unfolds her mind in every sense, in every manner, upon every matter. This is the way which Theology recommends us to follow in our interrogations: "*Daughter*, have you had bad thoughts?" "On what subject? how

often?" &c. "Have you had bad desires; what desires?" "Have you committed bad actions; with whom; what actions?" &c. I am obliged to stop. Many times the poor ashamed girl does not dare answer the questions, they are so indecent. In that case the holy man, ceasing his interrogations, says to her, "Listen, daughter, to the true doctrine of the church; you must confess the truth, all the truth, to your spiritual father. Do you not know that I am in the place of God, that you cannot deceive him? Speak then; reveal your heart to me as God knows it; you will be very glad when you will have discharged this burden from your mind. Will you not?"—"Yes."—"Begin, I will help you;" and then begins such a diabolical explanation as is not to be found but in houses of infamy I suppose, or in our theological books. This is so well known, that I have often heard of wicked young men saying to each other, "Come, let us go to confession, and the curate will teach us a great many corrupt things which we never knew;" and many young girls have told me in confession, that in order to become acquainted with details on those matters pleasing to their corrupt nature, they went purposely to the confessional to speak about it with their spiritual father. Sometimes I have heard the confession of young girls not above sixteen years of age, who explained to me such disgusting things with a precision, a propriety (or rather impropriety) of terms, that when I asked them where they had gathered all this strange learning, they seemed as much astonished at my question as I was at their confession;

and said to me : " Why, father, our former confessor taught us all this, and commanded us never to omit these details, otherwise we should be damned." I replied to them : " I pray you never use such terms again, they are unworthy of a Christian mouth, you have misunderstood your confessor."—I learned afterwards that these misguided persons left my confessional, because, they said, I was an ignorant confessor, *who did not confess like others, and who did not cause them to say all !*

After so many instructions, the young girl is well indoctrinated, well fitted to answer either the questions or the purposes of the priest. This poison diffused in her heart soon infects her whole mind and destroys her purity. It is precisely at such a point of time that her cruel foe waits for her. When he sees that she is made vicious and corrupt by the teachings of the confessional, he is sure of his success.

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[The modes by which the priest persuades his victim that she is without sin in doing whatever he commands, since he is responsible, and since he can absolve her from it, and other means of deceiving at the confessional, are then too graphically related to be publicly told ; and I have thought it best, with the consent of the author, to suppress all but the closing facts.—EDITOR.]

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The truth is that some cunning priests have a seraglio like that of the Sultan, and it is by no means an easy task for him to conceal his favourites from each other, because he says to each that she is his only mistress. It would be easy for me to enlarge on this point, and to

give other details, but these I hope will suffice ; perhaps they are already too many.

Besides these immoralities, confession has another great danger for young girls, namely, that they believe themselves obliged to consult their confessor upon every matter, and matrimony above all ; which he permits, counsels, or forbids, according to his views, interests, or passions. It is needless to say that when she is a mistress of his own, he prevents her from marrying as much as possible.

The advice and influence of the confessor are immense in this important business, and never does a girl suffer her lover to address her without consulting her spiritual father. She says to him, " Father, such a gentleman has addressed me, do you advise that I receive him ?" If the confessor does not know him, he answers that he will learn concerning him and inquire about him. Wo to the young man who does not go to confession, to mass, and fulfils not carefully all the duties of a Catholic ; wo to him who has offended a priest, for the priest will do all in his power to slander him in the mind of his penitent, and to prejudice her against him. This is so notorious, that a young man often presents the confessor of his future bride with some valuable object to have him in their interest.

Once a young girl came to my confessional, and said to me, " Father, will you have the kindness to listen to me ? I am not one of your penitents, because I was accustomed to go to M\*\*\* before you came here ; but I

would have your advice in a very important matter." "Speak, daughter," answered I.—"I am about to get married," she said; "but my confessor is very much against this marriage, for he says, my future husband is a bad Catholic, who never confesses himself and never goes to mass. I do not dare to marry against the will of my director, for my union would be very unhappy; but as I love this gentleman and as I am loved by him, I hoped that perhaps you would not be of the same opinion; if you tell me that I can espouse him with a good conscience, I think I should be a happy woman."

I knew the young man well; his only crime was, that being a little too learned to be a true Catholic, he sometimes laughed at our practices and ceremonies, and once he said to me, "I esteem you as a man, but could I deem that you believe all that you teach, I should despise you."

While she was speaking, I was struck with the thought of how much evil a bad man is capable of doing in the confessional. I replied to her: "Daughter, in the unhappy times in which we are doomed to live, it is too difficult for a pious girl to find a pious husband. Mon. D. is an honest man, esteemed by every body. Since you love each other, and since your families agree to it, my opinion is that you would be wrong in not marrying him. Gradually, perhaps, you may turn him a good Catholic by your own conduct and prayers. But mind that you must never tell him the opposition of your other confessor, for fear Mon. D. would avenge himself." Some months after, the happy husband said to me, "Do you

remember that some time ago I told you you believed not all your lessons? You have now proved it to me in counselling my bride to be my wife, although I was a bad Catholic. This decision is against your theology, is it not?" added he, smiling.

It would be difficult for persons, strangers to the confession, to conceive to what a degree a confessor is master of the imagination of women. He turns them at his will completely, with this idea—that he is the Vicegerent of God, a divine oracle, that he holds the keys of heaven and hell in his hand, with a perpetual fear of purgatory, hell, &c. which he keeps faithfully before their eyes. And let it not be forgotten, that the minds of women are naturally confiding, and one will know that they are, in the hands of a cunning confessor, a docile instrument. It is not, then, astonishing that so many innocent girls are the victims of those wolves which devour unmercifully their prey, and commit with impunity crimes under the cover of this ministry in the name of religion.

Once, about nine o'clock,\* I confessed a young girl not above seventeen. I had scarcely opened the wicket, when I heard her weeping and sobbing bitterly. A presentiment told me half of the matter, but I could not guess the whole. I had been a priest only about twelve months. I asked her to calm herself and to speak. At length she

\* On a great many occasions we confessed till eleven or twelve, and we remained in the church to the end, with only one or two women; but always, as commanded by our ridiculous rules, with a wax-taper burning in the church.

told me—"I am the most unhappy creature in the world. I thought my confessor a holy, or at least an honest man. I have confessed myself to him these last six years. He endeavoured, some time since, to have me come to the vestry under different pretexts; but last night I went into the vestry, and he asked me if I did not love him; he invited me to go to his room, to live with him; and said that God should reward me for it, and that I should be lost if I did not do so. Happily we heard some noise, and he left me for fear of being discovered." I said to her—"Be calm, my poor child, but never go to this man again; he is mad; never see him; never go to his confession; you will not be lost." "Do you think so, father?" she replied in great simplicity; "do you think so? He assured me I should be lost?" "Never mind; I assure you, on the contrary, that you will lose yourself if you keep the least intimacy with him. If by chance you meet him, and he again solicits you, threaten him that you will complain to your family." This story is one of a thousand in my own experience.

The most disgusting conversation between a lady and her confessor is when her marriage is at hand. Many times, honest ladies, disgusted at such improper questioning, answer in an angry tone—"Why do you ask such questions? I had no idea that a priest could ask such questions." In their sickness, *real or pretended*, he visits them, shuts himself up with them, to confess them, or to otherwise profit by this occasion. A priest with whom I was in the seminary, said, in one of those cir-

cumstances, to a young country-woman lying sick, that he was a physician also ; and under this pretext he behaved in such a manner that the poor dying woman, gathering all her strength, called aloud for help. But he told the family who rushed in, that she was mad or in temporary delirium.

Commonly speaking, priests intrigue with married rather than with unmarried women ; therefore confessors neglect nothing to gain some married lady, and they succeed but too often. But the fear of the husband, and that of failing in their plans, make the confessor much more cautious than with young, unmarried girls. They must avoid any imprudence which would ruin their reputation for holiness. However, their cunning is at fault sometimes ; and I heard of a curate who, in spite of all his previous successes, once suffered a terrible check. After a long trial, he obtained, as he supposed, an interview with a lady, who deceived him by telling the affair to her husband. Instead of *her*, the priest found him ; and being surprised and disappointed, he received a volley of blows from a club without any resistance, praying only *not to be discovered and dishonoured*. Unhappily all husbands are not thus apprised by their wives ; but many husbands, as well as fathers, knowing what may happen in the confessional, forbid for ever their wives and daughters from going to confession, or wisely require that their confessor be the oldest they can find.\*

\* One of our best poets, satirising with all the power of his wit, in a small piece entitled "The Husband Confessor," this unnatural

This is a small specimen of the crimes committed through confession ; but I undertake not to detail all, for it would indeed require an immense book. In the confession the priest teaches boys to despise their parents if they are not good Catholics, or if they are Protestants. He teaches when it is a sin to rob them, and when not. In the confession he teaches wives to be unfaithful to their husbands ; to rob the money of the family for the sake of the Church, for seminaries, for priests, for masses, for indulgences, for the holy work of the conversion of infidels, for dispensations during Lent, and freedom from fasting, &c. The more her husband is irreligious, the more money is demanded ; for his soul is in the greater danger. In confession the priest teaches the husbands among the common people to *beat* their wives when of a bad temper, in order to soften them. In confession the priests teach fathers and mothers to make their children either priests or nuns, because "blessed is the family which furnishes either a priest or a nun." In the confession the priests teach men that *slavish obedience to tyrants*, and represent them as the *vicars of God*, the same doctrines which are repeated in the catechisms, speeches, and every mode of

revelation of all the actions of a wife in the confession, relates "that a husband, somewhat suspicious of the conduct of his wife, disguised himself on one evening as a Catholic priest, and shut himself in the confessional where he knew that his wife would come. She came indeed, and through her confession all his suspicions were but too well confirmed. He afterwards said to her—'Did you confess all your sins, my wife?' 'Oh! not all,' said she; 'I am not so great a fool!' 'Not all?' replied he, 'I heard enough in all conscience. I do not see what else you can have concealed.'"

instruction, to *propagate despotism* and perpetuate slavery. In the confession they teach kings\* to trample and crush their people, and people to murder kings, according to the interest of the Catholic Church.

Ecclesiastic rules prescribe to the curates in general never to confess in their own rooms or in the vestry without grave reasons. But priestly cunning is seldom unprovided with expedients. With theological restrictions and distinctions they always find a reason to elude the law, and then the confession becomes the most vicious meeting. There is one man whose name is sadly connected with this history of human passions; I mean the *sacristan* or vestry-keeper. He is the man of the curate; properly speaking, his slave, his devoted tool. Partaking with his patron of the spoils and fruits of human credulity, he knows that his income is the more abundant as people are kept more blind, and the more he is the friend of his curate. He gives himself up to him; he becomes the shameful instrument of his crimes, and sometimes even his wife and daughters are at the disposal of his master. I know personally a curate and his sacristan in this predicament.

Priests receive not a penny for confession; and this work being gratuitous, would be very heavy many times

\* Louis XVIII. and Charles X. had their confessors. That of Charles X. was very powerful at the Court. The queen Amelia, the lady of the present king Louis Philip, has L'Abbè Guillon for her confessor; and I would not say that the king does not confess himself, for he *attends mass* every Sunday in his chapel, secretly. This is a fact which may be relied on.

in hearing the illiterate common people, if Providence (as they say impiously) would not indemnify them by other *circumstances*. They are not paid ; but who is the devotee ? The woman in general, careful of her salvation and of that of her family, who will be anxious to prove to her confessor her gratitude by some rich boon. The priests only of the "*small church*" are paid for confession, because they have no other income. They are the priests who have refused to submit themselves to the treaty of 1802 between Napoleon and Pius VII.

If priests are not paid for the confession, they are fully rewarded in the confession of dying persons. The bed of the sick is the harvest of priests. With their invention of indulgences, purgatory, masses, they obtain whatever they wish. Some years their exactions were so exorbitant and heavy, that the French government prohibited, by a change in the code, donations made to the confessor who attends in the last sickness. But what is the wisdom of government compared with the craft of the priest ? Mere blindness. This law has stopped only open donations, regular donations ; but the boons and fees of gold and money remain as formerly, and more abundant, in order to indemnify priests for the loss of their pretended rights. In the sickness of men influential by their riches, talents, situation, or family, and who, during their lives, have despised confession, priests display the most astonishing exertions. They put in motion all the springs of the most refined artifice for the salvation of his soul. One of their favourite topics for

speeches and discourses in the desk, is this: "Every body dying without confession is lost, damned for ever." As soon as an unhappy wife or daughter has a husband or father whose life is endangered, do you see their inquietude, their uneasiness, their unwearied exertions to have him confessed, to save his soul, to preserve it from eternal damnation. The poor dying man is besieged without intermission. Vainly does he represent that he will not die so soon, that he is well enough, that he does not want confession, and other objections. Vainly, to obtain some rest, does he declare aloud that he does not believe in the confession, that it is useless, that he confesses himself directly to God, who is his father and Saviour; it avails nothing, and all his refusals serve only to increase the zeal of his family. Vainly he supplicates them to leave him to die in peace, to spare him those mental tortures, saying that he has not strength enough to occupy his mind with so difficult a detail; he has rest only when he has consented to receive a priest. "You will be so glad, father, husband, when having discharged your conscience into the bosom of the man of God. My confessor is a very good one, tolerant, learned, &c. I will call him for you. Do it for our sake, if not through faith; for what will people say if you do not comply? Will you leave us an inheritance of shame?" Will you

\* Such are yet the prejudices in France, in many provinces, that the family of a man dying without confession is *dishonoured*. His children are pointed out; and for this reason many fathers of families open their house to the tormenter of their last moments, and sacrifice the peace of their death-bed to the reputation of their families.

go and encounter the anger of God after a life passed without confession? You have time yet to atone for all your sin; oh! do not, when we shall weep your death, cause us to weep your eternal damnation." Then the dying man, liking better to buy the peace of his last moments by the trouble and disgust of confession, complies with their request. "Let it be so, then," since you wish it," he says. Thus his blind wife, or daughter, triumphs, and calls for the man of God. He is in waiting, watching his prey, from the beginning of the sickness. He comes in with the look of an inspired man, of a man sent by heaven to say to his fellow-creatures—"You are saved or damned. In my hands are the keys of heaven, or of hell. Through me only you can avoid the second and obtain the first." He *seems* to think only of the soul of the dying man, and *he thinks* only of his money. He *seems* occupied only with prayers for him; and he is counting to himself how much the mass, the burial, his rights of fees as curate, and his assistants, the duties of the sacristan, of the black-hangings, of the singers, the choir-boys, &c. &c. will produce to him. The wife and the whole family, seeing him thus occupied, fall into ecstasy at such piety. "What a man of God!" they say; "how happy we are to have such a confessor!" The holy man approaches the bed. "Brother, or son," says he, "I come from God to take away the burden of your sins, to bring you the grace of our heavenly father." He seats himself at the bolster and confesses him. In this

case a long time is employed in searching for the sins of a whole life.

Overwhelmed and overpowered, weakened in his mind and body by sickness, the dying man obeys every thing. Sometimes it is necessary for the physician to caution the priest lest he kill the patient. At length the holy father leaves his prey. He is joyful that he has succeeded. "God be blessed," he says; "there is yet one soul more redeemed from the power of Satan." Yes; and some gold also for thy purse, O hypocrite!

The dying man thus, after this long confession, which changes many times all his feelings, frightened with the fear of purgatory, and by its fires, which he has deserved by his negligence of his Catholic duties, is tranquillized only in buying masses, indulgences, and other remedies. His only fear is at not paying dear enough for them. The more he pays, robbing his wife and family, the more he is tranquil. In the beginning he dreaded the priest; now he must have him every hour, to confess him, to speak with him of purgatory, which he hopes to avoid by an abundance of masses and indulgences. If by chance he has complied with the desires of his family only for the sake of its reputation, and if the eloquence of the confessor has not been able to change his feelings, his family in his place order masses, &c. for the rest of his soul. He dies, and his death is a source of riches to the Church. Such is the true picture of the persecutions and the conduct of the priest at the death-bed of Catholics.

Besides all those *necessary* and sacramentary relations,

there are a great many others aiming at the same result. In each church priests have young and fair ladies, who take care of the vestry and of the linen of the altar. In cities each of them has her department, like the ministers of state ; each her altar, her saint. Every day they are in the vestry with priests, in rooms, antirooms, store-closets of the church, so many and so dark, not without design. They become the favourites of some priest, who chooses his own fair one. Nothing is more curious than to see those devotees speaking of the kindness, piety, and eloquence of their *patron*. They have between each other singular quarrels about the respective merits of their priests. They would not attend another's mass in the morning, none other than that of their beloved priest ; they will receive the wafer every day from no other hand than his ; assist at no other's catechism, listen to no other instructions, than his. They receive the beads, rosary, scapulary, only from his hands. He, and no other, initiates them into the sisterhood for indulgences. In short, a priest is the God of these deluded women. It is a duty with them, as with every devotee in general, to load the holy man with boons of every species, gold and silver, under various pretexts ; for example, for saying a mass, chalices, linen, purses, silk stockings, &c. Many happy priests buy almost nothing, and rely, as they say, upon Providence. Those devotees are happy only when they can have their holy, spiritual father at home, in fine parties, at supper, in the absence of their husbands if they are married. The most exquisite dainties, wines, &c. are lavished upon the dear father.

To be impartial on the subject of the confession, however, I must say, that if it is the source of so many evils, it is also the cause of some good ; for example, of *restitutions*. Many people, after having robbed, are troubled in their conscience, and tell it to their confessor, who requires a restitution. Often, and almost always, money is entrusted to him ; and I never heard that he kept it, but restored it to the owner. But they do not fail to profit by it, to show and extol the great advantages of confession. I have often received money from unknown people, with the direction only of the persons to whom I ought to give it.

Confession, as it is instituted in Catholic countries, is the most powerful institution in the world. If the confessor was an enlightened man, the enemy of slavery and darkness, the friend of mankind, father of his fellow-creatures, who trust him so completely, then it would be a treasure of blessings. But, unhappily, Catholic priests are quite the contrary. They are ignorant, knowing but the treatises of Dens, Sanchez, and their theology ; they detest freedom, and breathe but for slavery ; they are bachelors, they think but of their own welfare and of their passions. Consequently they have made confession what it is, viz. a school of debauchery, lasciviousness, deception, and corruption, division in families, trouble in domestic relations ; in short, of crimes of every description ; a school from which a father and a mother cannot be too careful to remove their children.

Here occurs, of course, this question—"Do priests

keep the secrets of the confession?" I answer, yes; I believe ninety-nine times out of a hundred. Many do it, not to discredit this useful practice; others by conviction and fear; for in our theology we are taught that God would rather do a miracle than permit the revelation of a confession. We afterwards publish and preach the same doctrine in the pulpit. We give it as a proof that confession has been divinely instituted by Christ; that never, since the days of our Saviour, one has heard of a revelation of any thing that occurred at confession. I myself was so strongly impressed with this idea, that for a long time I would not have dared to speak of a confessed sin, for fear of being killed by God upon the spot. Many of my fellow priests entertain the same belief through their whole lives. It is needless to say, that in spite of all the Catholic assertions to the contrary, revelations are made public; but they are rare, concealed from laymen, and denied firmly by the clergy. I can say that I have heard some of these revelations with my own ears.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*Corruption of the Clergy—Its celibacy—Life of a curate in a country parish—His loneliness—Gradually he forgets his vow—The cunning of priests—They are obliged to conceal themselves—The motto of the Clergy—The servant-maid—Curious mode of life—The death-bed of an old priest—Monstrosities of the Priesthood, La Collonge, Mingrot, Contrafatto—The Lords of the Church—Priests play their masses at cards—Their intoxication—Their battles.*

CATHOLIC or Protestant writers, who have spoken of the corruption of the Roman clergy, who have described its matchless wickedness, have not shown its cause. They saw only the effect without tracing it up to its source. I will try to supply their silence. I have read a certain number of those books against a body to which I belonged, a body which I know as well as it is possible for one to know it; and I can say that its whole degradation is *unknown*. Careful of saying nothing which can shock the reader, I will reveal only what is necessary to unveil those "anointed of the Lord," but nothing to offend the eyes. I shall surprise Protestants, doubtless, by saying, that in France the immense majority of *young men in our seminaries* are not *corrupted*, and many of them are virtuous. It is nevertheless true. They are ignorant, superstitious, fanatical, given up to their supersti-

tious practices, to theology, &c. ; but, I declare it, not at all *vicious*. That may be conceded, although in appearance in contradiction to their indecent studies ; for they are taught that it is necessary to learn all these in order to be able to fulfil their duty ; and to hear confession in all its extent, it is necessary to know all human perversity. *I do not give a judgment on these reasons* ; be that as it may, our superiors *endeavour to inspire us*, in those recitations, with a great dislike of such crimes ; and I can affirm that it is very painful to the natural sense of decency in any man to be obliged, as we are, to be familiar with such books.

This is the true picture upon this matter of the seminaries. That I know ; and I am indifferent whether it agrees or not with pictures drawn by others.

The story of the corruption of the clergy begins only when they are out of the seminary. Those young men are sent into a parish in the quality of curates or vicars ; in the beginning they fulfil their duties with great care, and for some time remain faithful to their vows. Many told this to me *after their fall* ; and I have seen it myself, except in a few exceptions. But by and by they open astonished eyes. Restored to freedom after ten or twelve years of thralldom in a college or seminary, they become quite different men ; gradually they forget their vow. "Oh !" said a young priest to me, with tears in his eyes, after having four or five years discharged the duties of his station, "God only knows what I have suffered during this time ; and if I have fallen, it is

not without fighting; had I been allowed to choose a wife, as it is the law of God, who destines man to marriage, whatever our rules teach to the contrary, I should have remained virtuous; I should have been the happiest man in the world; I should be a good, a holy priest; while now I am —— Oh! I am ashamed of myself.”

This is really the sad history of all their falls; for, let us be just, what can become of a young priest of twenty-five years of age, confined in the lonely wilderness of a country parish, in a village where he has only the society of his sacristan and of his servant, because all his parishioners, being but coarse peasants, especially in the south and in the west, where scarcely any know how to read, are unable to afford any comfort to his solitude? His duty occupies him but little, save on the Sunday; and during the whole week, after his short mass, and some confession of women, he is reduced to ask himself—“What shall I do?” Study has few, if any, charms for him, because he is forbidden to read or study precisely those matters which entertain the intellect. He is allowed only to peruse theology, always Dens, Gomez, Rodriguez, the Life of Saints by Godescar. If he should obtain some other books, the bishop, in his episcopal visit, would chide him severely, and call him a worldly priest. Our great poet Racine, so pure, so chaste, is scarcely tolerated; and many bishops do not allow him in the libraries of their priests. The young man, before his profession, had imagined and anticipated a pleasant existence in the ecclesiastic state, and he finds but pri-

vations, ennui, disgust ; his passions are also raised ; the demon of bad thoughts takes possession of him. Moreover, his ministry puts him in so many circumstances with ignorant young country-women, in whose most secret thoughts he is obliged to enter, that his virtue receives many shocks. And can it be otherwise when a man has those intimate and continual relations required of the Catholic priest with women ? No ; it would be unreasonable, to expect from human nature more than it is able to do, to put it on too difficult a trial. Such is, however, the situation of every Catholic priest.

I do not say all this to veil or excuse the crimes, the natural result of this institution ; but I think I am bound to give the matter of fact as it is. Sometimes the resistance is firm, the struggle long ; but at length this martyr of fanaticism, this victim of his system and of his Superiors, abandons his vow through despair, shuts his eyes and throws himself into the slough of passions. This is the end of almost all priests. In the beginning their conscience reproaches them bitterly ; they try again to be faithful, they flutter, fall, reform again, go on, fall again, and at length, to finish this horrible struggle, remain in vice. Let us add to this sad catalogue the temptations against their faith and doctrines, which end with many in complete Atheism, into which they fall by the excess of degradation, temptations to Atheism in those who reason, from the impossibility of reconciling their faith with reason.

The resolution being taken of enjoying life, as they

say, after having been so long deprived of it, the only question is to enjoy it safely and *secretly*, viz. without dishonour. Dishonour is for a French priest, as for all his countrymen, more intolerable than death, and a priest *whose excesses are known* loses his reputation; therefore he will neglect nothing to hide carefully both them and his victims. Inconceivable mystery of the human species! This obligation of keeping a profound secret is the best reason which he puts forward to seduce them; for other Frenchmen, by their vanity, boast of their "bonnes fortunes." But the priest cannot make that boast, because he would be laughed at and scorned. His hypocrisy and care of his fame prevail over his national vanity. By this way, through their dark ministry they have an immense power upon the mind of women, for they attack only these whose disposition they have long studied in confession. The reader can have some just idea of this power from this single fact, of which I know the *personage*, because it became public. A priest in a parish not far from mine, laid his snares for a young married woman, who had the reputation of piety because she attended mass every morning. He, through his diabolical arguments, won her and triumphed over all her scruples. She went to him almost every morning in the vestry before the bell rung to call the people to the mass. He then confessed and absolved her, and she received the Lord's Supper at his mass. The good people said, admiring her daily communion: "How pious is this

young wife—she partakes of the Sacrament every day ; she is doubtless a saint.”

There are no means which their cunning does not invent to meet with their victims. If the husband is jealous and suspicious, his wife, upon the advice of the curate, will feign to be sick ; and it is the duty of a priest to visit often (every day if possible) his sick parishioners, he will remain alone with her to speak about spiritual matters, in appearance, or to confess her.

If a priest, in spite of his proverbial cunning, is discovered, and if he is denounced to the bishop by public opinion, he will be removed, to silence the scandal, and sent to another distant village where he will be unknown ; and where, by and by, he will begin again the same mode of life. Sometimes he will be interdicted, according to the will of his lordship, who in those cases judges at random, and more by his caprice than by justice. The priest is blamed by his Superiors, not precisely for having been weak and guilty, but much more for not having “better kept appearances,” as said the mother of Talleyrand, formerly bishop of Autun. He in his youth said once to his mother, who engaged him in the church because he had little hope of his advancing elsewhere, being lame ; “Mother, I do not feel myself at all born to celibacy.” “My son, KEEP APPEARANCES, like others,”—“*Regarderos les apparences.*” He did not keep even appearances. This kind of “bon mot” is the motto of the clergy ; and it ought to be in-

scribed in its banner, as was the device of Constantine—"In hoc signo vinces ;"—"by this sign thou shalt conquer,"—for it is with this it gains so many victories. A priest who is faithful to it, is never guilty, although he cares neither for God, nor virtue, nor his fellow-creatures. Hence the horrible crimes, so common among the clergy, to whom nothing is sacred, to avoid dishonour.

Our ecclesiastical rules, composed by Superiors as cunning as men can be, and who know well the dispositions of priests, perhaps by their own, try to avoid *scandal*, the true plague of their religion. Our rules forbid us keeping a maid-servant who is not of a certain age. This age varies according to the whim of the bishop of each diocese, because he is the supreme master and director of every thing. On this plan the rule would be useful if executed ; but owing to priestly artifice, there is no real law, and it does not prevent priests from keeping young and beautiful servants, with whom they live as with a wife ; for, as they say,

"Il est avec le ceil des accomodements."

If, however, her youth violates too strongly the episcopal rule, the priest will apply directly to the bishop, and will say that his servant is, *perhaps*, a little young ; but on account of her faithfulness and other good qualities, it would be difficult for him to find another one who suits so well. "But how old is she ?" says his lordship, flattered by this mark of submission. "My Lord, between thirty and forty," answers the priest, making her older by ten

or fifteen years; and the bishop, who has not the proof of the contrary, and who requires not the record of her birth, replies—"It is a little young; but however, on account of her good qualities, I give you a dispensation of age; take care of scandal, and remember that a woman drove Adam out of Paradise." And the priest boasts of having a *dispensation of age*, and thus avoids being accused to the bishop by *his spies*.

Consequently this half ecclesiastical couple will be careful of *scandal*. To avoid the suspicion of living too friendly with each other, the better to keep up appearances they will feign ill-will towards each other. Sometimes the vicar, when he has some of his parishioners at home, will pretend to be very angry with his servant, threatening to dismiss her; and his good, short-sighted peasants will try to calm his counterfeited anger, to soften him, and to pray him to keep her. Good people!

The "*age law*" does not apply to curates who have at home their mother, sister, cousin, or niece; and few, for this reason, are without one of those persons; consequently they are at liberty to hire young servants. Moreover, a priest is always stationed as far as possible from the place of his birth. He is quite unknown, as well as his family, in his parish; and many times he takes with him a young girl, who is his relation only by Adam, and whom he presents under the name of his cousin or niece. Nobody inquires the relation of the curate and his pretended cousin. If, however, there happen some evident proof of their too intimate under-

standing, he sends her, under some Jesuitical pretext, to some distant city for some time; or he tries the use of medical remedies. A physician said to a priest, an acquaintance of mine—"Sir, I have already twice prescribed for your servant-maid; but beware, I will not do it a third time." Would this fact, that I *warrant*, be a confirmation of the disclosures of Montreal?

A priest who is satisfied with the good services of his maid, makes his will in her favour, to the great disappointment of his own relatives, who watch the inheritance of their rich member with eager and impatient eyes. But alas! there are no pleasures without pain, no roses without thorns, no spring without winter. The demon of trouble invades those secret illicit unions as well as others. Those internal quarrels end always to the disadvantage of the poor curate, whose reputation is at the mercy of his companion. She has not been at his school without profit, and she draws from him pretty fees, the price of masses or indulgences, by threatening to publish their intimacy, and bringing upon him an interdiction. The unhappy man yields to the force of circumstances, and stripping himself of his purse to pay for keeping his secret, he consoles himself that he has still a good income in his holy water and the credulity of his parish.

But if a good understanding presides over their union and silences the little quarrels occasionally arising, they grow old together. The maid takes care of the income and of the interior of the house; and the poor priest has

not always the power of preventing her encroachment even in spiritual matters. The "Vicar of Wakefield," (whose history caused me to shed bitter tears at seeing what I might have been,) had his department, and his wife hers; and they were never mixed together. But the servant-maid of the Catholic curate is less circumspect, creeps into spiritual matters, and gives decisions almost as much revered as those of the priest himself. He is, indeed, the true oracle of the parish, the true sun of the light; but his satellite is, on her part, the feminine oracle; a star the light of which, although reflected from his own, is not without merit. When his mate and representative gives, by usurpation, some decision about masses, or saints, or prayers, his jealousy murmurs a little; but knowing that it is a duty to yield in a family to a great many contrarieties for the sake of peace, he never contradicts her opinion by a contrary one in public.

Other priests commit much greater and much more horrible crimes, and renew the monstrosities of the cities of the plain as they are spoken of in the Bible. On one occasion, I confessed some young lads of my catechism, from eleven to fifteen years old. Each of them confessed secret and abominable crimes (with a man). I inquired, trembling, who this monster was, being almost sure that there could be none but a priest capable of such abominations. They answered, each after the other, with the simplicity of their age—"Father, it is our vicar." I begged them to give me leave to make use of

their confession ; for Theology teaches that this leave of the penitent is necessary to do so.

I wished to stop so monstrous a disorder, at first secretly if possible, and if unsuccessful, afterwards to try another way. I remembered this passage of the Bible : "Corripe illum inter te et ipsum,"—"Correct him between thee and him alone." I went to him, and with words as moderate as I could use, I remonstrated with him on the horror of such conduct. "Go to the D—l with your remonstrances," said he ; "who gave you this right?" "Who?" replied I, "my character of minister of the Gospel ; and if you continue the same course I shall expose you ; for I have this leave from the lads, and you are then lost. I require your word that you will cease for the future." Hereupon he called me a spy denunciator of the bishop. "The best proof to the contrary," said I, "is that you are neither interdicted nor denounced to the bishop or to the procuror of the king. I only pray you, between ourselves, for your own sake, for that of your conscience, for the salvation of those boys, to reform your life." After a minute of reflection, he answered—"It is right, you are a good fellow ; I will do my best to correct myself. Do not reveal this."

Few years, if any, pass without some affairs of this or of the other kind being made public at the tribunals ; and the priests are condemned to the galleys, from which they escape only by the help of their friends in concealing them.

Other priests entertain the most vicious habits. In the beginning of my priesthood, at the time when I dreamt only of holiness and purity, I was called to the death-bed of an old priest above seventy years of age. All the features of death were stamped on his face, he begged me to come near his bed, and said to me—"M., I want to confess before I die. It is a long time since I received this Sacrament—I require your ministry." "But, Sir," answered I, quite frightened at the task of disentangling an intricate conscience, "I am very young and little experienced—my fellow priests would better suit you." As I spoke, I saw suddenly a gleam in his dying eyes. "You are young," said he, "it is precisely for that reason I called you. Were you older I would refuse you, for then you would not be better than others. God forbid that I should die confessed by them. Be seated, Sir, and let us begin." I had nothing to answer, and so I listened to him. Among other human wickednesses, he avowed an horrible crime, at which I could not restrain a mark of horror. "Do not shudder," said he; "you are young, and in the course of your life, if you confess your fellow priests, you will find worse things than these." But his reflection did not diminish my horror; I remained petrified, scarcely knowing what he said. He was obliged to recall to me the formula of absolution, that I might give it to him. The crime, the circumstances, his old age, his distorted features, his death, made an impression upon me which I have never been

able to erase from my memory. I knew particularly another middle-aged priest, who, also on his death-bed, being waited on by a servant, tried to *corrupt him* !

I said, in the beginning of this chapter, that no crime could deter a priest from its commission if it is necessary to efface the traces of others. A Paris journal gave some weeks ago a striking proof of this truth. A priest of the diocese of Dijon, (department of the Cote d'or,) De la Colonge by name, after a long life of debauchery with a young seamstress whom he had seduced, smothered her one night, cut her body into pieces, and hid them in holes in his house. This is not a history of old times, but of the year 1836. It did not occur among Cannibals or Anthropophagi ; but in France, in the beautiful province of Bourgogne. And the monster who perpetrated this murder, in consideration of the interference of the bishop (the creature of the new king,) and of the high clergy who took a great interest in him, has escaped the pain of death, even that of exposure and pillory, that his cassock, and the body to which he belonged, be not dishonoured. He has been condemned only to the galleys.

Some twenty years ago the whole of France resounded with the before unheard of crime of Contresotto, a monster priest with a human visage ; and of that of Mingrot, who, being unable to seduce a woman, first killed her, and violating her dead body, cut it to pieces and dispersed the fragments. Her brothers, while this priest fled to Piedmont, through protection, published this almost incredible history under this title, " To the Brothers

of the Female Victim." There is not a doubt about the truth of these facts. They are public, and well known in France, as well as a great many other cases less monstrous. The publication in the newspapers of such clerical crimes is one of the most powerful reasons why the clergy, thus unveiled, curse the *freedom of the press*, which keeps an open eye upon their conduct. The newspaper, "The *Constitutionnel*," and the "Courier," deserve the thanks of the friends of morals and humanity for their courage and zeal in discovering and publishing these horrors without fearing the power or the vengeance of the Roman clergy. But, say priests to their ignorant flocks in answering those accusations, "Such priests are bad we acknowledge, but all others are good," and Catholic France believes so. Blind people ! Open your eyes, and see those hypocrites ; if they do not commit all those crimes, they are yet almost all vicious, and deserve better your scorn and horror than your veneration.

I ought to have begun with my holy Superiors, my lords bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and pope, who are in general as much more advanced in the way of corruption beyond simple priests as they are in the way of honours and dignities. I beg their lordships' and holiness's pardon for having so long postponed to do them justice, and I make haste to repair my fault. Unluckily, however, I know them but very little, for my relations with the lords of the Roman Church have been rare and "en passant." Thank God my native land is

no more sullied by the holy see, its cardinals, and their school of licentiousness. They have left at Avignon, where they resided during the great schism, traces enough of their passage, as I myself have ascertained in my frequent intercourse with this land. I can say nothing about the pope but what every body knows ; I will make only this reflection, which has struck me, viz. that he causes himself to be almost worshipped ; and that he receives more honours in a day than Christ in the three years of his mission.

Among French bishops I know but three ; mine own, of whom I will not speak, for *pertinent reasons* ; Mr. de Cheverus, archbishop of Bordeaux, and Mr. de Guelin of Paris. As for Mr. de Cheverus, I should be reproached by my conscience if I said other than good of him. He is one of those men who atone for the crimes of many Catholics. His virtues recall those of Fenelon and of Lamotte, who were truly good and pious men not *because*, but *although* they were Catholics. His administration of his immense diocese, his charity, his tolerance, have won to him all hearts ; and every time I went into his diocese I heard every where public blessings upon him. He has been created cardinal lately.\* He is one of those few men whom Roman purple honours not, but who honours Roman purple.

I could give, perhaps, some vague accounts of other bishops ; but I have made it a rule to speak only of what I myself know, and have seen with my own eyes. There-

\* He is more lately deceased.—ED.

fore, I will speak only of the archbishop of Paris. This man, who cut so deplorable a figure in the secret council called the Camarilla, which has destroyed the throne of Charles X. by dint of its follies, has all the duplicity and hypocrisy of a secret counsellor. Under the veil of piety and virtue, he conceals marvellously well his deep corruption. So far does he go in this Jesuitical art, that many a Parisian who may read this book will perhaps think me a slanderer; but it is nevertheless true that I have by accident been personally acquainted with one of his mistresses. It is also true that his highness has many others in the convent of the *Carmelites*, in the street "*Saint Jacques*," his seraglio. It is no less true than the pimples upon his face, ascribed by his admirers to penance and mortification, are derived from a quite different source. When, four years ago, the mob of Paris, in one of those awful insurrections so frequent there, passed over his palace and pillaged it, many *gowns*, which were not the less like a priest's cassock, were found in his cabinet.\* His confidants published that they were those

\* A few days ago I read in a public journal the letters of an American traveller, who was present at a ceremony in the church of Notre Dame at Paris. He says of the archbishop—"I do not rely much upon my physiognomical knowledge; but, however, the features of this priest are those of a *man of pleasure*." It was impossible to guess better. *I know it to be true.*

This archbishop, sitting in the Chamber of Peers by the right of his place, proposed, in 1823, the abominable law of "*sacrilege*," which *condemned to death for the least robbery in a Catholic church*. When, in 1826, a tribunal deliberated on this question of Dumontiel, a French priest, who desired to be married if the law would allow

of his sisters; who, by the way, never went to this palace. *Credat Judæus Apella, non ego.* He is the only bishop of whom I can, or *wish*, to give an accurate account. Would it not be right to say with Sinon, in Virgilius—"Ab uno disce omnes?"

Intemperance and lust are two excesses which are seldom to be found the one without the other. Priests being guilty of the latter in the highest degree, the former follows of course. No wonder if they have on this score so worthy a reputation. In all times, pontiffs of false religions have been celebrated for their banquets; and Catholic priests are worthy successors of those ministers whose wines Horace praised so highly:

"Finget parimentum Falerno saliaribus potiore cœnis."

The sober American people will scarcely believe what I have to say about the intemperance of the priests, although I shall not say the whole truth. They feast almost daily, except indeed when they are obliged *better to keep appearance*, and they remain at table two, three, four hours, eating, drinking brandy and other spirits, &c. The best wines of Bordeaux, Bois, Medoc, all cheap in the south of France, afford them fine occasions of indulging their appetites; and while in my country this shameful habit is confined to the lowest class, the priests preserve it faithfully. The strength of the habit

him to do so, his lordship published this threat—"If the judges decide it affirmatively, I will excommunicate the whole court. They will laugh at my excommunication, but we will meet together in the tribunal of God, and it is there I await them."

shelters them often from a complete intoxication. If this, however, takes place, and the wine prevails over the reason, then the charitable host takes care that his guest may be sent to bed secretly, where he remains secured from *profane eyes* till time has dissipated the hurtful fumes. It has been often a matter of wonder to me that servants never reveal such misconduct. While this "weak head" as he is called, passes thus from the arms of Bacchus into those of Morpheus, the others continue at table, drinking, playing, and relating obscenities. It is a very curious and instructive spectacle to see them in such occupations, half intoxicated, speaking of the sanctity of heaven, of indulgences, of mass, of confession; to see them *gambling their masses*; the winner says to the loser, "You will say ten, twenty masses for me," he therefore keeps for himself the money that he has received from some pious woman perhaps for so many masses, and the loser has to say them. I suppose that such prayers of such instructors must be very useful to the soul which lies in the Popish purgatory, waiting for these prayers that it may be freed and mount up to heaven. It is, perhaps, more curious to see those holy priests arising from table scarcely able to stand up. They call that a "battle," and the empty bottles are the "bodies of the slain." They are carefully counted after the battle.

Priests had their *days* of Marengo, of Austerlitz, according to their success in *drinking*. On a great occasion, there had been so sharp a *battle* that two of those

intrepid soldiers coming to a personal quarrel on the subject of their greatest number of empty bottles, fought together, threw each other down under the table, and rolled among the "corpses" (empty bottles), wounded, bleeding, swearing, and saying very odd truths to each other. It is needless to say that on these occasions the breviary, prayers, beads, &c. are put aside. O Catholic priests ! why are not the walls of your houses made with glass, as a philosopher of antiquity wished for himself, that every body might see into the interior ? your deceived people could then see and learn to appreciate you.

It is natural, after this picture, to inquire if Catholic priests go themselves to confession, and if they avow all their crimes ; to this I answer,—They are obliged to go to confession every fortnight, or at least once in three weeks, because their Superiors make inquiries about that point very carefully ; and it is an eminent recommendation to the Superiors to apply often and to the celebrated confessors. Many of the priests make their whole faith to consist in the efficaciousness of the confession, and they avow all their crimes to their confessor the same day in which they commit them. They believe firmly, that because a man whom they know as vicious as themselves has pronounced upon their head those words "Ego te absolvo,"—"I absolve thee," in extending his hand, they believe their sins blotted out, their conscience whitened and pure, and on the same evening they renew again the same crimes. Some others, who have no faith at all,

choose a priest of the same description as themselves, that they may say to the Superior, such an one is my confessor ; and so they confess each other, but in sport.

Commonly speaking, they seldom reveal sins which they have learned in confession ; however, that takes place sometimes. A priest one day seeing another passing by, said to me : “ That fellow gives himself up to the worst habits ; ” and he explained what habits.—“ How do you know that ? ” said I.—“ I confess him,” answered he.

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## CHAPTER XV.

*Purgatory—Its utility—Addresses of Priests upon this subject—All Souls' day—Mass—Its production—Its species—Trade in masses—The mass a general Panacea—Service—Burial—Rapidity in saying mass.*

NEXT to *confession*, the most useful institution to the Papacy is that of *purgatory*. These two are the columns of Popery. The confession is to get *power*, influence, entrance into the secrets of families, to procure victims for the priests ; and purgatory, the true foundation of masses, indulgences, &c. is to *fill the purses* of priests. Was it not, indeed, a beautiful idea, to open

an awful prison, to condemn nearly every dead person to it, for a longer or shorter time, to take the key of this purgatory room, and to say to survivors: "We will open the door, to set at liberty the persons whom you weep when your liberalities, fees, and offerings shall ordain it." The originator, whoever he may have been, whether pope, cardinal, or simple priest, deserves the best thanks of the whole sacerdotal race. The "infallible Catholic Church" has adopted and consecrated this opinion, the existence of purgatory, upon this passage of the second book of the Maccabees, "*Sancta et salubris est cogitatio pro defunctis exorare ut a peccatis salvantur*,"—"It is a holy and salutary thought to pray for the dead, that they may be freed from their sins." Under the direction of the Holy Ghost, as she pretends, she has put this book into the canon of sacred books. Hence, from purgatory, as many shoots from their trunk, sprang all those superstitions so useful, so productive, to the priests.

Purgatory, according to our doctrines, is a place quite like Hell, except that the soul shut therein may go out after a certain length of time; and as soon as a person is dead, if he is not doomed to hell (which nobody knows), he goes down into purgatory, where he finds the same fire and torments, but with the hope of deliverance. Therefore, it is a duty to the survivors to help the dead by all means in their power. Owing to the benevolent and careful attention of priests, those means are at hand. Now let us see how they will work this precious mine,

at what price they will sell their remedies against purgatory, their prescription for shortening it.

Doubtless they have a fine game with the tender and susceptible imaginations of women, when death, by its continual ravages, deprives them of children or of a husband. Listen to the Catholic priest in the pulpit; here is their best and choicest ground of addresses. They take hold of the imaginations of their female auditors, transport them into purgatory, and display its awful spectacle; show the flames, the sufferings of the souls; they force them to hear the cries of a son or a father in the fire, and then, speaking as this son or this father to their mother or daughters, "Can you," say these souls through the mouth of the preacher, "can you, O kinsmen, forget your beloved ones in these horrible abodes? While you enjoy the delights of life, we burn unmercifully in these fires. 'Crucior in hac flamma,'\* have pity upon us, you at least, you who are our flesh and blood, you to whom we gave life. Do not, we beseech you by all that is most sacred, do not spare masses, indulgences, prayers. They only can shorten our sufferings." Then the orator continues in his own name:—"Do you listen to your kinsmen? these are their very words, their complaints,

\* Protestants must not forget that Popish priests sprinkle their discourse with Latin words of the Vulgate; he who understands not is the more struck, and he admires the more, the less he understands. This is very useful at the desk. I know a friend of mine; who, when at a loss in his discourse, repeated some Latin phrases, and his auditors gazed at him in admiration. In the meanwhile he recovered the thread of his ideas, and went on.

their cries to you. Will you remain deaf to their entreaties? Their felicity in heaven, or their remaining in purgatory, depends upon you. The key is in your hands. The blood of our Saviour in the mass is all powerful. Make it flow for their sake on the altar.”\* This is only an every day affair; but the great feast of purgatory is called All Souls’ day, and on this occasion the Church displays all its most magnificent and gloomy pomps, to strike the senses and imaginations in such a degree that I dread myself the approach of this terrible feast. In the eve, all the bells toll for the whole evening a most mournful tune. The walls are covered with black hangings, the altars with pictures representing heads of dead men, bones, tears, scythes, &c. ; a few wax tapers are lighted; that an inspiring darkness may reign in the whole church; the mournful service of the dead is mumbled for hours. At the end, (when all the hearts of the people who come to the church to be moved and affected for their dead, and pray for them,) when their hearts are in a suitable disposition, a noisy and clamor-

\* This recalls to me one of the most eloquent illustrations which I ever met. A mountebank in a public place sold some powder, the virtue of which was infallible against the colic, he said, especially for boys. The price was only ten cents. “You,” said the eloquent speaker to the gaping peasants, who did not buy at first, “when your children, through the violence of a terrible colic, shall roll and writhe before your eyes imploring your succour, then put those ten cents that you save to-day upon their poor stomachs.” “Will this application relieve them?” “No; but the same sum will put in your hand an infallible remedy. Which will you prefer, the miserable cents or the health of your children?” Every body bought his powder.

ous priest, often warmed, as an aid to his eloquence, by the juice of the grape, mounts the desk. He thunders; he howls; he roars; he yells like a man in purgatory, and begs for prayers, masses, &c.; reproaches severely those who do not send them by these means, indulgences; and he compliments those who do. Let the reader think what effects must be produced by those roarings, in the profound darkness of an evening of November (the feast is fixed at the first of this month), upon the susceptible minds of women. You hear nought but sighs, sobs, groanings. Tears flow in abundance, happy when some fainting gives not to the scene a more tragical aspect. The more the priest sees the effect of his eloquence, the more he increases his clamours; till at length, breathless and quite spent, he ceases his sacrilegious game.\*

\* I beg leave to relate a story which, however ridiculous, will show how the Popish clergy has made a bad use of its position. I cannot warrant it, but I believe it firmly, for I know others more absurd.

A country parson, to add some strength to his discourse, told his parishioners on one of these occasions,—“Brethren, to prove to you the reality of the fire of purgatory, I will pray to God to show it to you;” he had beforehand agreed with his sacristan that he, at a designated word of the curate, should throw upon the heads of the assembly some enflamed tow from above the ceiling, through a hole. The obedient sacristan mounts to his post with a reasonable stock of combustible matters, and the priest to his pulpit; the one ready to *command* the fire to fall, the other to *make* it fall. At the time agreed upon, the priest cries as an inspired man, “Fall, fire, fall!” and the sacristan through his hole throws down his enflamed tow. Each one is seized with consternation, crosses himself, and recommends himself to the mercy of God. This play lasted for some time, and the speaker, growing ardent, forgets that perhaps the fire may be exhausted; “Fall, fire, fall,” he cries more

Immediately to succeed by this pious tenderness of the assembly, a collection is made for the relief of those poor souls who are suffering so much. Money falls in the plate; and, as said Tetzell in Germany in the time of Luther, "As soon as the money sounds in falling, the soul is set at liberty and flies into heaven."

On the following day it is the same repetition of chiming of bells, songs, ceremonies, collections. People walk to the church-yard, where prayers and holy water especially are poured out upon the grave to relieve souls; and every good Catholic felicitates himself for having rescued his father or mother with his money, prayers, and holy water.

He who does not understand how vivid and lasting an impression this masquerade produces on the mind of the people, knows not human nature. It is so well engraved in their hearts, that for the whole year priests never want for well-paid masses, for the help of souls in purgatory.\*

and more. But the simple sacristan, putting his head through the hole, said, in the midst of the dreadful expectation, and with his well-known voice, "Sir, I have spent all my tow."

\* Chateaubriand, in his too much praised "*Genie du Christianisme*," falls into an ecstasy at the institution of All Souls' day, and praises it in his bombastic and insincere style. I will give a true idea of the esteem this writer deserves in *religious matters*. Being in England during our Revolution, he had a mind to occupy his leisure in writing a book against the Catholic religion; but a priest, exiled also as himself, said to him, "You will not succeed; all has been said against our faith; you would show greater courage in writing in behalf of a persecuted religion." Accordingly he did not write *against*, but *for* the Roman religion. Hence the *Genie du Christianisme*.

Of all the remedies which Popery keeps against purgatory, the most powerful and efficacious is the mass, being a renewal of the passion of our Saviour, and a ~~true~~ effusion of his blood; a real offering of his same body and flesh to his Father. But there is a great difficulty, well deserving the acuteness of a Popish theologian. How is the application of the merits of Christ made to the soul in the next world? That is the true question, because the merits of Christ being infinite, if they are conferred through the mass entirely to the souls, then a single mass will suffice to empty purgatory; and then, too, farewell to the *income*.

Popery has resolved the question, and avoids the difficulty, by saying that nobody knows that, but the more masses are said for the dead, the more relief they receive. Not so bad. In a mass there are two kinds of merits,—that of Christ himself, and that of the priest. The first is independent of the dispositions of the *celebrant*, and the masses of a drunken or Atheistical priest (save his own merit) is as efficacious as that of the greatest saint. This doctrine is very consoling and encouraging for believers, and secures masses to the worst almost as well as to the good priests.

The idea of the mass, as I believed it to be for many years, made me tremble, but at the same time filled me with joy. I prepared for my first mass, by long fastings, prayers, and mortifications. To make one's God to come from heaven; to change bread into his body, and wine into his blood; to eat God; I had not the least

doubt about these. My only inquietude was that I should not be holy enough.

Priests are taught to consider themselves as Christ when they are in sacerdotal dress.\* They must be persuaded that they are no longer men, but Christ himself; they walk to the altar as being Christ; they speak to the mass as being Christ; pronounce the words of consecration in their own names according to this sentence, "Sacerdos alter Christus,"—"the priest is another Christ.") The tortures of a priest, who, believing sincerely about the presence of Christ upon the altar, and who says his mass for the first time, being in a mortal sin, is above all description. But by and by he accuses himself to it.

It is clear enough that money is the intended aim of this institution. The current price of a dumb mass is a franc, or twenty cents; but this rate is only the legal, the avowed rate, and for common people, or for the poor. The rich, they would be ashamed to proffer so small a sum for so precious a good. In the same dioceses priests have been skilful enough to establish the custom not to receive masses at twenty cents, but above this price only.

\* The sacerdotal garb represents the virtue which God requires in his priests. The *amict* round the neck represents divine hope; the *aube*, a long white gown, innocence of life; the *girdle* or *cordon* round the loins, purity and chastity; the *maniple* on the left arm, patience and submission; the *stole*, (etole, a long kind of maniple from the neck to the feet,) the sweetness of Christ; the *chasuble* which covers all, the great virtue, charity. Is it possible not to smile at such masks of vices?

In large cities, the trade of masses is an immense business. Priests have their books as well kept as the ledgers of merchants; and why not? In fact, are they not merchants, and more fortunate than any others, for they receive money and give *nothing* in exchange? It is their custom to estimate the state of religion by the abundance or scarcity of masses. For some years this trade has suffered many checks, and diminishes from day to day. More than a hundred times I have heard my fellow priests say sadly—"Religion is on the decline, masses are scarce."

But in provinces where they have succeeded in maintaining ignorance and superstition, they are very abundant. When a priest in those happy countries has more masses than he can say himself, he sends them to others; but he sends only the *legal* price, *twenty cents*, and keeps for himself all that he has received above this price. The priest who has not any, is glad to say them for twenty cents.

This practice, however, has been condemned as "simony," but theology has found a way to legitimate it; and now, thanks to its decision, there is no difficulty about this. It would be, indeed, much simpler to keep all the money of those masses without saying them; but it would be a robbery, and I never heard of a priest who did it. They believe the money their property only when mass is said. This manner of trading in masses is a species of bill of exchange, drawn upon purgatory, for every country; and I am certain, (without, however, any

direct proof of it, for want of intercourse with my fellow-priests in America,) that there is from Europe into this country a great sending of masses, because I know that the richer countries in spiritual goods supply the poverty of others. The same advantage is produced to the suffering soul, whether it be said in Europe or in America. The devil is always caught, and his victim greatly relieved.

In general priests dislike dumb masses, and they have instituted the custom of great masses or services for every thing ; but, above all, for dead persons, on the day of the burial, another within the year, and a third within the year. This is a rule from which it is not possible to escape without incurring the reproaches of impiety and of negligence for one's dead. There are eight or more different classes of services ; the lowest for the poor, the highest for the rich. The death of a rich citizen is an event of joy and triumph for the holy Church, and for all the mob. I have sometimes laughed very heartily at seeing their disappointment when some good burial, upon which they relied, escaped their fingers by an unexpected recovery.

The first-rate burial is a gorgeous pomp. But every thing in this magnificence is very dear ; each object, from the bell, from the number of the blows of the bell, to the meanest candlestick ; each person, from the lofty curate to the poorest dead-bearer, has his price ; and the whole amounts to an immense sum. But no matter ; for the vain Frenchmen, not for the sake of religion, but for the

sake of glory and appearance, distinguish themselves by the splendid burial of their kinsmen as much as by their carriage and their saloons. It is the fashion, and there is a rivalry, pleasant to the priests, to have the most magnificent pomp. No one family in easy circumstances, although very little pious, would dare to spare money for fear of being dishonoured. Curate, vicars, sacristan, beadle, choir-boys, all the flock of the Church, watching with eager eyes their prey, assist at the ceremony. The walls, as on All Souls' day, are covered with the apparatus of death; innumerable wax tapers burn before each altar, round the coffin in the nave; above all, at the master altar, and in the hands of wax taper bearers. After the burial they are carefully gathered for the curate. Therefore, as he sells them by the pound, he takes care that they may be lighted as late, and extinguished as soon, as possible. They make an important part of the pomp, and nothing is more praised than a fine burial adorned with many and big wax tapers. The reason is obvious enough, for curates, in this matter, rule the fashion. Sometimes I saw more than one hundred pounds sold at forty cents each pound by the priest. There is a repetition of the same expenses for the family in the service of the fortnight and of the year. All this wax, the profit of the curate, is not set down on account, and dispenses not with payment. After long and slow chants the whole procession goes to the church-yard, singing gravely, walking gravely, like men whose time is conveniently paid. It is an affair of half a day.

But alas for *poor people*! What a difference! All is done in a scandalous hurry, with a disgusting niggardliness. They make haste, they run, in their chant and march, to the church-yard. They neglect nothing to disgust families with this style of burying, that people may in consequence buy a finer one. They seem to say—"We make yet too much ado for so small a sum," although it is very heavy. With this notice, a foreigner travelling in France, and meeting a burial, can easily judge if it is of rich or of poor people. In the first case the holy men of the Church have a complacent, grave, majestic look; in the second, a discontented and wry face for spending their time on such trifles.

Between this service and the other two, they who are careful of shortening the purgatory of their dead, give large sums of money for many little and common services, and masses during a long time; because the Church teaches us that if they are rid of their sufferings, the surplus is not lost, but is put into the spiritual treasury of their family. In many churches there are perpetual foundations; for example, a dying person gives a meadow, a vineyard, a farm to a church, on condition that some masses be celebrated every year for the sake of his soul. Although this is less frequent than formerly, there is not a church which has not its foundation. The reason of these perpetual foundations is, that nobody knows when one is freed from the fiery prison; but the more masses are said, the sooner it is. Sometimes a soul, that of a

poor man for example, who has no means to buy prayers, remains there till doomsday.

This is the chief utility of masses, to relieve souls in purgatory ; but Protestants would fall into a great error if they should believe that they are used only for dead persons. A mass is proper for every thing. There are masses for sickness of body or of mind ; against pest, famine, insects ; for the sake of horses, cattle, hogs, cows. A peasant once said to me—"I am not astonished that I have lost so many cattle this year, for I have not caused masses to be said for them." The pretended sorcerers and witches have always a mass said for the success of their magic, but they do not tell the priest their intention. A young maid who desires a husband has recourse to a mass. Is she abandoned by her lover, it is a mass of the Holy Ghost which will cause him to come back to the poor deserted girl. The wives of irreligious men expend a great deal of money in masses for the conversion of their husbands and sons. I said once jocosely to a layman, a friend of mine—"I am sure you never give any thing to the Church." "How? Are you not ashamed?" replied he ; "my wife exhausts my purse for your masses." If a young man is called by law to the lot of conscription, his poor family ruins itself in masses to obtain a good ballot for their boy ; but, in spite of their efficacy and of money, he draws a bad ballot, and is obliged to go to the army. Travellers, young people before marriage, generally before every sacrament, women in the family way, merchants for their trade, husband-

men for their corn; every body against lightning, rain, drought, hail, all diseases, especially epilepsy, temptations, possession of the devil, sorcerers, ghosts, &c. have recourse to mass. It is a general panacea. The proof of this is in our missal, or mass book. There are masses of every description and for every thing above mentioned; masses of the holy sacrament, of the five wounds of Christ, of the holy Virgin, of the apostles, martyrs, angels. The ecclesiastical storehouse is well furnished, and the desire of every body can easily be accommodated. But, methinks, if Christ should come as formerly upon the earth, he would find means to drive those impious traders of holy things from his temple.\*

A priest to say mass must say it fasting, viz. not having breakfasted; a rule very hurtful in grand ceremonies, in which it is necessary to stand at the altar till twelve or one in the afternoon. A great many priests, through their faith in the true presence of Christ in the sacrament, would think it the most horrible crime to breakfast before their mass. But some, however, do so; they eat and drink secretly in the morning. I know two or three vicars who, after having passed the whole night in gaming and drinking, have mounted the altar scarcely

\* I do not speak of the scandalous masses called of "asses," in which an ass brayed three times towards the assembly, which answered "Alleluia;" nor of the mass of the "fools," in which twelve jugglers played the most ridiculous and indecent games in the church of Beauvais, &c. I do not recall old times, but describe these days, the celebrated nineteenth century. I describe only my own time, and what I saw *with my own eyes*.

able to stand from drunkenness. The sacristan said to one of those worthy ministers of the Gospel—"You have not said the half of your mass this morning." "Hold your tongue, you rogue, I have done too much for twenty miserable cents." And he immediately went back to game and drink again.

To be the quickest in saying mass is a great honour among Catholic priests, and they fight eagerly for victory. When I saw some priests at different altars endeavouring to get through one before the other, I could imagine I saw the races of Olympia, or those of the Champ de Mars at Paris, where the best runner has the prize. What a scandalous rapidity in their recitation of those prayers; what haste to arrive at the end; what indecency in their demeanour! And they have faith! They drink with an astonishing eagerness the wine in the chalice, which is always as full as possible, if not remarked; and they believe firmly they drink the real blood of their Saviour. Instead of waiting till the choir boy has finished his answer, to spare, the celebrant goes forwards altogether; and they mumble both their Latin prayers, which neither of them, perhaps, understands. And you, Oh Catholics! you are simple enough to believe that such a mockery will help the soul of your dead kinsman, will preserve you from calamity, will be for you a source of blessing and a shield against evil!

## CHAPTER XVI.

*Superstitions—Hatred of the Clergy for learning—All the inventions of Popery are profitable to it—The Lent—Its dispensation—Power of the Devil—Souls coming back from purgatory—Possession by the Devil—Story of an Indian possessed by him—Miraculous medal invented by the Archbishop of Paris—Sorcerers, wizards, ghosts, haunted houses—Physician saints—The saints, patrons of parishes—Their feasts—The income thereof for the curates—The good dinners—The smoky saints—The other one removed—Relics—Milk and tears of the Virgin Mary, in phials—Saint Janvier—A natural explanation of his annual miracle.*

THE superstitions of Popery have been often spoken of, as well as its hatred for every species of knowledge diffused among the people. It has been justly called a great extinguisher. But perhaps one has not sufficiently remarked the reason of this predilection for ignorance. From the pope to the lowest country priest, there is not a single Catholic minister who does not know that *ignorance* is the mother of superstition, and that superstition is an abundant mine, and at the same time the best supporter of their authority. This is a truth which cannot be too often repeated. Therefore, in order to do justice to Popery, we ought to consider all its arts, all its endeavours to debase or darken intellect, that it may found its power and riches upon general ignorance.

This is the true spirit of the Catholic Church, according to which the French clergy in this country have been so troubled by the diffusion of knowledge. It has endeavoured by every means to tarnish and dishonour it, and has called it, in derision, "Progress of Lights."

In our seminaries, our theology and philosophy publicly teach us *that it is much better that the people be not able to read*: because they are easier to be ruled, and unable to read bad books. Consequently, in a great many villages where the curate is the true power and oracle, before the Revolution of 1830, schools have never been heard of; and the peasants languish in the most shameful ignorance. In such places the power of the priests is unbounded, and they are precisely like those Jugglers who extinguish the lights as much as possible while playing their slight-of-hand tricks, that they may not be observed: so the darker it is, the less the priest will be observed. Since the Revolution of 1830, the minister of public instruction, Guizot, a Protestant, to whom France is so much indebted in this respect, has scattered a great many schools in those villages, where such complete ignorance reigned that it was with great difficulty that one could find a competent mayor who could *sign his name*. The most powerful opposers were the curates, who with all their might tried to prevent this institution, and forbid the boys from going to those schools. The whole spirit of the Catholic clergy breathes in this answer of a Catholic priest, whose reasons I asked for not having favoured the introduction of schools in his parish.

"I am not so foolish," said he; "my peasants would become learned; they would by and by laugh at me and at my doctrine; they would despise both, and cease their offerings. What would become of me and our religion in this parish? Any priest that favours knowledge is a foe of his own interest and of his Church."

It is owing to this system of the clergy, which swayed the destinies of Europe for so long a time, that during many centuries the darkness of France has been such that our descendants, for their forefathers' sake, will not believe our history. Philosophy, indeed, (which has been in the last century impious precisely in proportion to the barriers and follies which it had to pull down) made great exertions to dissipate this thick mist settled on the human mind: although it has succeeded in part, unhappily the remainder of the former superstitions are hitherto immense. Long treatises, learned books, have been written upon this subject; but although very valuable in themselves, they are almost useless, because people know not how to read them. It requires a long series of years before France can see the end of an evil which has been the work of time, which has been rooted for fifteen centuries, by men who affirmed they spoke from heaven, who boasted of a divine authority, and were the only teachers of mankind. I cannot express how painful and humbling it is to me, proud and fond of my country as every patriot must be, to see in new America knowledge and learning diffused every where; while in old France, superstition, bigotry, and ignorance,

maintain their seat in the minds of many of my countrymen wherever priests have preserved their authority.

My intention is not, nor can it be, to explain all the Catholic superstitions, it is a task beyond my power; but I wish to show how they are all *lucrative* institutions to the priesthood. For example, some days before the Lent (I do not speak of fasting in itself, but of the abuses, for Popery has defaced every thing,) our lords the bishops issue their mandatory letters, which run thus: "We, (each speaks in the plural,) we, by the grace of God, bishop of \*\*\*\*, order that the present letter shall be read and published through all our dioceses, and we prohibit thereby the use of flesh; we permit eggs, milk, and butter. We engage you to embrace the way of mortification, and to give to the Church all which is retrenched from the usual expenses. Our dear fellow priests will give you *dispensation* as usual; therefore every person who is not disposed to abstain from meat or to fast, goes to his respective priest for a *dispensation*. Men, indeed, would be inclined to laugh at the order of the bishop; but for their wives, for the sake of peace, not to incur the

\* I do not judge if bishops fast; I do not believe it; but many priests do not care about it when they can eat *secretly*. What is the most singular is, that each bishop, following his whim, gives leave to eat flesh or forbids it. In this manner, out of two contiguous dioceses one is obliged to abstain from flesh, the other can use it. Sometimes a house situated in the limits of two dioceses is in each part liable to two different laws: the inhabitants of one part of this same house eat flesh, the others would be damned if they ate.

scandal of impiety, they submit themselves to the irresistible power, and buy dispensations. At Paris, where every thing is performed in a fashionable way, in the vestry of each church is a bureau, with a chest for money; a priest is seated here the whole day, selling and retailing dispensations, according to the fortune of each Catholic. If the wife has a mind to fast, and to follow all the abstinences of Lent, the dispensation is only for the husband; and the family is obliged to have two cookings entirely distinct, and one cannot participate in the dishes of the other.

By this salutary institution the bishops and the priests gather money, while their flocks *fast and pray*. The spiritual shepherds share between themselves the wool of their sheep, and instead of giving the example of mortification, their table is never so well served up as in Lent; but they take great care not to be seen.

The rule of dispensations is only for lukewarm Catholics, whose number is infinite; but true Catholics fast the whole Lent, during its forty days. I wonder how in the middle ages, when every body obeyed the prescriptions of the priest, however exaggerated and unnatural, they could bear this penance; for then the fast lasted till sunset, and it was strictly forbidden to eat before. Now it is allowed by modern rules to breakfast at twelve. Preachers and theologians, in their discourses and books, bemoan for the degeneracy of their time, for the remissness of ardour, for the decline of true faith. Notwith-

standing their declamation, I can assert that it is a hard penance to observe a whole Lent.

It was a remarkable artifice of the clergy to create and to spread a firm belief in the immense power of the Devil upon mankind, and at the same time a belief in purgatory, from whence souls come back to speak to living men, and ask prayers from them. Few articles have been more useful to the priests. In bestowing upon the Devil the power of intruding himself into all human affairs, priests did not fail to teach that they only had the power of getting rid of him. Thus they put themselves as mediators not only between God and man, between heaven and earth, but even between the Devil and man—between hell and earth. It is not difficult to conceive what an increase of power has been the result of this device, if we consider the weak, superstitious, and ignorant disposition of men in Europe for so long a time. This doctrine is carefully preserved now in all our books of theology and of piety; and a few years ago a review, published at Paris, defended firmly this belief, and taught the interposition of the Devil in all our business. Now, the real belief in the *possession* by, and the exorcism of, the Devil, although less preached in the pulpit, is still taught in our seminaries as in the twelfth century. Our gravest theologians discuss the signs of *possession*, the cases in which a simple priest is obliged to apply to the bishop, and the cases of exorcism. Our *ritual*, which is our code, is filled with a great many explications on this matter. Exorcism is a

long and heavy operation, as well for the Devil who is driven from the body, as for the *possessed* man, and for the priest who performs it. Collet, one of our ablest authors, relates seriously the story of a young Indian, who, for some sin, having been seized by Satan, was exorcised. During the operation the young man became blue, black, &c. The Devil took him and suspended him on the ceiling, where he remained a quarter of an hour without any support. He then put him down. The priest, armed with his "stole," breviary, and holy water, spoke to the poor fellow, who answered (it is said) in Latin, an evident proof of possession according to our rules, for he never knew a Latin word. He gave in this language the reasons of his possession; but at length the Devil gave way to the power of the holy water, and left him.\* I have heard from the mouth of my Superiors many such histories, more or less wonderful, but I was never so fortunate as to be an ocular witness of them.

\* This play, if it really took place, was very proper to impress the minds of the ignorant Indians with a salutary fear of the power of the Jesuits. This recalls to my memory the far-famed story of a priest, Grandier by name, who, having under the tyranny of the Cardinal Richelieu, all-powerful minister of the weak Louis XIII, written a book against the *Celibacy of the Priests*, was publicly accused of having bewitched, and given to the Devil, by means of a rose, a whole nunnery at Poitiers. After the most infamous jugglings, the most barbarous tortures, he was condemned to death as a magician and sorcerer, and publicly burnt at Poitiers. I read, but a few years ago, the recent history of this martyr, by a priest, and I assure my readers that *all, all is approved*—his condemnation, punishment, and death.

The causes of possession are generally a great *sin*, a refusal of obedience to the spiritual power, or of payment of money to the Church. The priest at the high mass pronounces the name of the defaulter, and cursing him, gives him to the devil.

But in creating the power of the Devil on mankind, if I may so say, the Roman Church has created also the true remedy to this evil. This remedy is in every object belonging to the Church, especially holy water, the *scapulary*, blessed box of the Palm Sunday, blessed bread, the wax taper, little crosses, images of saints, statues of the Virgin Mary, pictures, relics, crucifixes, beads, medals,\* are the precious defensive weapons which furnish the ecclesiastical arsenal. If one is wanting, another is of use. A good Catholic must have at hand all those arms, for the spiritual combat against the Devil. It is an amusing spectacle to examine the bag of a devotee, quite filled with all this religious baggage.

This spiritual furniture has also another great advantage, viz. to be all-powerful, or at least very efficient, against the misfortunes of life. In 1832, says a paper from Paris, every remedy failing against the awful cholera, a miraculous medal of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary was advantageously made

\* It is very curious to see mountebanks selling those thousands of *talismen*, in public markets, in the days of the fair, to the peasants, who receive them from the hands of the mountebank crossing themselves devoutly. The *mountebank merchant* has a great figure of some *reverenced saint*, to which he approaches with great respect each medal or beads before giving them to the gaping peasants.

use of. The *holy* archbishop of Paris caused to be coined thousands of this medal, which he blessed and sold afterwards. Those who wore it *with faith*, could laugh at the terrible plague. Those who died in spite of this preservative, *died by their fault*, because they had not faith enough, says the notice attached to the medal. If each disease was thus cured by a miraculous medal, what would become of the college of physicians?

It is on account of this blind belief in the power of the Devil that, even in this century, the fear of sorcerers, wizards, witches, is so much fostered among the people. Those sorcerers are the depositories of his power, owing to a convention between both parties, the sorcerer and the Devil. The man gives himself up to his *patron*, who, in exchange, imparts to him his power. They are the fear of the country, especially in the south and west of France, where the peasants see no other preservatives against them than the masses and prayers of the priests; and priests are not forgetful enough of their interests to destroy this belief. Moreover, many people firmly believe that every priest, by the right of his ordination, acquires an immense power over the Devil, whom he can invoke at his will with a terrible book called "*Grimoire*," and to whom the priest can give up his own enemies. Hence this common belief, that poor fellows, thus victims of the Devil in this life, are changed into wolves for some time; if they do not satisfy the priest, they wander under this shape in the country, and they are called "*Loups Garoux*," *were-wolves*.

Another shoot of the same tree is a belief that souls come back from purgatory, a belief which is as firm in France, generally speaking, as the certainty of the existence of the sun. In this case, as in the other, the priests alone, by their holy interposition, can drive ghosts from the haunted houses. It is always the soul of some dead person which, by divine leave, comes from purgatory to say that it is imprisoned in a burning vault till prayers and masses shall set it at liberty.

Thousands of people have heard them, they say, spoken to, and been addressed by them. Such persons as profess disbelief in ghosts pass for impious men and free-thinkers. Common priests have not an opinion in this matter different from that of their flocks.

People spare not money to get rid of those inconvenient guests. A lady, a widow, told me that she had heard her husband, the night before, asking her to procure masses for the rest of his soul. She had brought with her a sum of money, which I do not designate for fear of not being believed. My remonstrances were useless, and she told me, "I am sure that I heard him, the dear husband, and I shall be at rest only when you shall have taken the money and said the masses." Seeing the absolute impossibility of vanquishing such obstinacy, I took two pieces of five francs, (about two dollars,) and I said to her, "*with that*, I hope that he will be saved."

Besides these very useful inventions, priests have established a great many relations between saints and

men, and it is happy for the people that they have a celestial help in the saints, who, besides the skill of their physicians, are in the various diseases incident to the human frame, a source of hope that never fails them. Thus, for instance, Saint Anthony the abbot secures his votaries from fire; Saint Anthony of Padua delivers from water; Saint Barbara is the refuge of the timid in times of thunder and war; Saint Blass cures disorders of the throat; Saint Lucia heals all diseases of the eyes; Saint Palamo, the teeth; Saint Domingo, fever; Saint Rock is the saint invoked under apprehension of the plague. In short, under every pressure or affliction, some saint is accessible by prayer, whose peculiar power it is to relieve the object of distress. Those saints, so useful, so powerful, have of course their feast in each parish placed under the peculiar protection of some one, and which is celebrated solemnly. This saint and his

feast are a good income for the curate. Happy the priest whose saint is somewhat celebrated! In the day of this feast from morning before day-break, nearly every body crowds to the statue of the venerated saint, and offers him prayers, kneeling, holding in their hands burning wax tapers, presenting him (in the person of the priest) with a sum of money, according to the fortune of each, or devotion. I do not see a great difference between this Catholic people kneeling before a statue of stone, or a bone or a picture, and the heathens. No matter, *this devotion is productive*. During the whole day, for the whole week, (for each first-rate ecclesiastical

feast has its octave,) the church is filled with throngs, which come from every country with their wax tapers and money. Never go to a Catholic church without money. Before, or after their prayer to the statue, they go to the holy table, where the curate lays his "stole" upon the head of each, and reads some lines of the Latin Gospel, that part which is said at the mass of the saint. *After each Gospel*, each person lays his extorted money in the plate held by a servant boy who follows the curate. A single priest is not sufficient to the piety of good Catholics, he has recourse to his neighbouring priests. They render to each other this office. They come by ten or more, according to circumstances; they stand before the altar, mumble as quick as possible "*their Gospels*" for the people. Silence is only broken by a deep buzzing, and the sounding of money falling in the plate, which, when full, is emptied into a large bag in the vestry.

When the ceremony is over, viz. when the thirst of thousands of people is quenched, the priests go to the curate's house, where a *sacerdotal dinner* is at hand. The saint pays the expense thereof. The guests, fatigued and thirsty by so many and so long recitations, which last for more than six or eight hours, praise their patron in honouring the dinner. The praises of the good saint are celebrated: one drinks his health, another laughs at the credulity of the parishioners, at this tax levied upon their simplicity, at the efficacy of those mock prayers, &c. The priest whose saint is next to be celebrated

says to the others : " Gentlemen, in a fortnight, a month, I require your service for the same occasion. My patron and I will endeavour to make you satisfied. Let us drink his health in anticipation, that he may send us a great many simpletons."

Money exclusively is not laid upon the altar : but butter, linen, ham, &c. are as good.\* The heavenly saint despises nothing, and the earthly saint suits himself to each offering tolerably well. Generally, the curate keeps great care of those saints as it may be supposed, and they are grateful for their good services. A friend of mine, a pleasant fellow, and who had no more faith in the saints than in Jupiter, but who *profited* by his own *patron*, said to me once, while visiting his church : " Do you see this small and smoky saint? He is my best saint, much more useful than all the others : he is worth to me more than a hundred and fifty dollars a year."—" Well," said I, " but you are very ungrateful to him in leaving him so dirty, he will become angry with you."—" You do not understand the matter," he replied. " If I clean, paint, and gild him, he will look new : and then what will become of this look of antiquity,

\* Those offerings remind one of those made to the idol Dagon, the priests of which said that the god ate the provisions, while in reality they themselves profited by them.

Formerly, before the Revolution in France, people indiscriminately slept in the church the whole night previous to the feast ; what improprieties took place between men and women of every species, I do not dare to say. I am not sure that this does not now happen in some villages.

which throws him back into the night of time? he will be a saint *of fresh date*, he will lose his honours by my paintings, gilding, &c. ; and, what is much sadder, I shall lose my income. Mysteries, mysteries, suit our holy religion."

A Paris journal related some months ago the history of a priest, who, having intended to put a new saint in the place of an older, was accused by his parishioners of having sold the old one, who was very powerful, to the cathedral of Chartres for the sum of 42,000 francs (8,400 dollars), and who was prevented executing his purpose by them, armed with whatever weapons they could lay their hands on ; from whence such a tumult arose, that the mayor, followed by a brigade of gend'armerie, was compelled to interfere. That happened in the month of May or June, 1836, in the diocese of Chartres, the cathedral of which has but just been burnt, in the middle of France, but sixty miles from Paris.\*

To cause the intercession of saints to be more immediate, more direct, priests have invented the doctrine of *relics*, by which God bestows many benefits upon men. True,

\* In the beginning of my priesthood I gazed with astonishment at a custom of young *devotees* and nuns in general, who pay so tender a devotion to the young and beautiful saints, and keep their pictures in their prayer-books ; above all, of the handsomest of all, Louis de Gonzagues. They adorn with their pictures of every description, their closets, bed-side, &c. It was not long a mystery to me, no more than to see the reason why those devotees apply for confession to young and handsome priests ; while old priests are followed only by old women, and usually but few young ladies.

indeed, many benefits are enjoyed by monks and priests. Happy is that church, monastery, parish, in possession of a tooth, or bone, or hair, or nail, or even rags, of some renowned saint. There cannot be a surer road to wealth. The shrine shall glitter in diamonds, the treasury shall be replenished with silver and gold. In one church you can see the heads of Saint Peter and Paul, in another a lock of the Virgin Mary's hair, a phial of her tears, or milk, a piece of her green petticoat, a robe of Jesus Christ sprinkled with his blood, some drops of it, some of his tears in small bottles, some drops of the water which flowed out from the wound of his side, a large piece of the true cross, all the nails used in the passion, the identical porphyry pillow on which the cock perched when it crowed after Peter had denied Christ, the rods of Moses and Aaron, and two pieces of the real ark of the covenant. Rome, indeed, is the great depository of the greatest part of those precious antiquities; however, other cities have a great share in those riches. The city where I was brought up can rightfully boast of a tear of the Virgin Mary, shed and collected at the foot of the cross where her dying son hung. At each remarkable feast it is respectfully exposed to the veneration of Catholics in a phial. In times of drought or of flood, it is carried in a magnificent shrine through the streets, to call the pity of God. I have myself carried it upon my shoulders with great reverence. "The most curious relic, if it really exists," as says a pleasant author, "is a groan of Saint Joseph, carefully secured in a bottle." Happily

for the sake of Catholics, other relics are, perhaps, more authentic and *real* than the mysterious *groan*, the invention, probably, of the fancy of this author. As charity is a fair virtue strongly recommended by Catholics, they communicate to each other their spiritual treasures. They sell, borrow, lend, give relics. The first way is most used. Some churches, which are transformed into human charnel-houses, keep open office for the sale of this precious good; and owing to this trade, either by miracle, or by fraud, or from cupidity, a desire for money, the same relic, for example the same head, arm, or body of the same saint, is to be found in different churches. This is, perhaps, a potent miracle in favour of relics; and that unbeliever must be an obstinate man, if, after having seen in five or ten places, distant from each other some hundred miles, the same piece, he did not believe in the power and virtue of relics.\* A French author had once the curiosity to count the heads of a celebrated saint, and found them amounting to thirteen; each was the *own head* of the saint; each, as such, performed miracles and enriched churches, priests, &c. I asked once

\* The student who has read the history of the middle ages, knows that Europe was abundantly furnished with relics in the Crusades. The Crusaders found a large quantity of them at Constantinople and Jerusalem. They became in their hands more precious than gold or silver, because they sold them at an exorbitant price to the convents and churches of Europe. Some impious and avaricious pilgrims, instead of *true* relics, filled vessels with common bones, bones of animals, and sold them as bones of great saints. No marvel if they made so astonishing miracles. Oh, human mind!—See *Letters of a Father to his Son*, 2 vols. 8vo.

of a priest, a great devotee to relics, the explication of this. He said that he "did not see why God should not multiply them for the sake of the Catholics."

Although I limit myself to France, I cannot refrain from saying a word of the celebrated Saint Januarius of Naples; because what I have to state in this matter is new. His miracle is annually ruled and governed by law as unchangeable as tide or sunrise. For many years I have read his story and continual miracles in my breviary, wondering at such an exertion of kindness and power. I have never seen it, but I have the following details from an Italian gentleman, an old officer in the service of France. The blood of Saint Januarius is kept in a phial of glass, and on the day of his feast it grows limpid, and by and by it bubbles up to the sight of the whole people, who cry—"Hurra for Saint Januarius!" The simple explanation of this wonderful fact, as I heard it from a naturalist in Paris, is this. The pretended blood is a particular composition of red material, which subsides, when cool, at the bottom of the phial; but which, becoming warm by the hundred and thousand of wax tapers burning round its small shrine, and by the breath of the priest, who holds it a long time near his mouth, begins to liquify, and by dint of agitation and movement, seems to bubble up. Sometimes it is long before the operation succeeds. "The French army having taken possession of Naples, the saint was required to show his kindness by the usual miracle; but, for the purpose of agitating the people against the French republicans, it

failed. The French general, who did not jest with saints nor with their worshippers, sent peremptory orders to the priest to perform his spiritual trick, under pain of making an example of the attending priests, *which orders were promptly obeyed.*"

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## CHAPTER XVII.

*Indulgences—Their true nature—The scapulary—Its explanation—Reserved cases—Hindrances of marriage—High price of dispensation for marriage—The peasant who cheats the bishop—The hundred dollars—Every thing vendable—Two homes—Benedictions—Holy water.*

I HAVE seen in some Protestant books that the matter of indulgences is misrepresented, or at least not represented as it is in France. Perhaps those authors have formed their opinion upon the theology of Spain or of Italy. In my country, this is the theory of indulgences. Indulgence is a complete or a partial remission of the pains due to sin. But we do not know in what way God receives the expiation of purgatory; for example, an indulgence of a hundred days is not a relaxation of a hundred days of sufferings in the next world, but only as useful as such penance in this world would be. Now, how will God make this application?

how many days or hours in purgatory will those hundred days of indulgence spare us, the Popish dogmas do not say. Hence a man with a million, and a thousand millions of indulgences, is liable to a long abode in purgatory if the application of them is not made by God adequately to his faults. I give this as the true theology of France in this matter.

There are two species of indulgences, the plenary and partial. The greatest of all is gained in the Jubilee, a solemn and gorgeous feast through all Catholic countries at the same time. It was at first instituted by Urban II. (if I mistake not,) to call pilgrims to Rome, and to fill the empty treasures of the Pope by the selling of this indulgence. Formerly it took place once in a century, now it is every twenty-five years. As indulgences cost nothing to the Church, and as they produce a great deal of money, they are multiplied to such a pitch that it is amazing what a vast quantity may be amassed for the other world with common industry. For pure trifles you can gather indulgence of a thousand days, tens, hundreds, thousands, of years. A good Catholic, somewhat avaricious of his spiritual wealth, gains many plenary indulgences in a day, but with this restriction—that only one is applicable to himself, the remainder are destined for the dead. In the time of my Catholic fervour, I am sure that I have gained above two thousand plenary indulgences for myself, and ten times that number for the dead; so that if purgatory is not empty, it is not my fault. I was a true Don Quixote for releasing every

captive in the kingdom below. I had a double register, one side for myself, the other for purgatory. Every morning my first care was to visit my book, and to see what this day I could send to heaven or to the purgatory for dead men, especially for the most poor and abandoned.

Sometimes in my prayers, by the example of some saint, I begged God to show me a soul, delivered by my intercession, mounting up from purgatory to heaven. I never saw any. Some priests have seen, as they say, at the altar, the soul of one for whom they said mass flying away to heaven.

I cannot enumerate all the means of gathering indulgences, but I will not pass over the far-famed scapulary, one of the most abundant mines of wealth. It is a Catholic talisman of most precious value, in honour of the Virgin Mary. Devotion to this is said to preserve its followers from damnation, whatever their crimes may be, because God will rather perform a miracle than allow the loss of a person pious to the mother of Christ. The scapulary is a piece of stuff with these letters, I. H. S. on one side, and two hearts on the other. They are the three first Greek letters of the name of Jesus, *Iησους*. The Devil fears very much this terrible weapon, the institution of which was by a great saint, who saw the Virgin Mary in his sleep, (fit time for such a vision.) She appeared holding a scapulary, and commanded him to make use of it. Its diffusion was prodigious, and there are few true Catholics, especially among women, who

do not wear round their necks this spiritual collar. In many churches the statues of the infant Jesus and of the holy Virgin have each a scapulary hanging round their neck. During the whole time I was a fervent Catholic, I wore one very devoutly, and I believed it had a great part in my spiritual victories. Immense indulgences are attached to it; wonderful miracles are attributed to its mediation. It is not possible to be damned with a scapulary round one's neck; the Devil has no power on a man *scapularised*; Death itself respects him. "A pious officer," says the book written upon this subject, "received in a battle a ball, which was flattened against this best cuirass, and fell at his feet." "Another man," says the same book, "being drunk, fell into a river, and was prevented from drowning by the scapulary, which kept him afloat for a whole night, till some fishermen, seeing him in the morning, saved him, wondering at such a miracle." The Gospel is not more firmly believed than these tales; I believed them myself, I must avow it.\*

When I spoke of confession I did not explain the "reserved cases," a curious and lucrative matter. Among Catholic sins, there are some liable to the absolution of common priests, others can be absolved only by the bishop, or even by the Pope. When a confessor hears

\* Scapularies are among those thousand of boons, more or less valuable, which devotees lavish upon their confessor. Each of those spiritual fathers wears some one embroidered by one of his fair penitents.

of a sin which he has not power to remit, he says to his penitent, "Your crime is too great for my power, I must write to the Pope or to the bishop, it will cost you some dollars." The poor fellow waits for the answer from Rome, and remains bound by the Devil until that moment, and pays willingly for his freedom on the arrival of the blessed letter.

This distinction between sins, it is said to simpletons, is established in order to give a greater horror of those reserved crimes, but in reality to obtain more money or more influence on the minds of penitents. There is at Rome a special tribunal called "*La Penitencerie*," and occupied only with the absolution of penitents. Another tribunal, called "*La Dotterie*," is for dispensations for every species; above all, for marriages. Catholic laws, in the middle ages, had extended "*empêchements*," or hindrances to marriage, as far as the twelfth step between kinsmen; and then there were few marriages without paying money for dispensations. Now they are bound to the fourth step; the Pope for the first, the bishops for the others, grant dispensation. In the first case especially, the fine is very costly; for example, a man who is worth ten thousand dollars a year must pay a thousand to the Pope, because the fine is the tenth of the living. If he does not pay this sum, his marriage with his cousin is sacrilegious; but owing to the trifle of one thousand dollars, it will be legitimate and valid. It is the same sum for a man who wishes to marry the sister of his deceased wife, &c. Immense sums of money are thus drained

from France and other Catholic countries, and sent to the Pope to fill his chest, at the expense of their foolishness.

For poor people it is cheaper, but perhaps heavier in proportion to their wealth. It is very usual for persons of common rank to endeavour by every means to represent themselves to the bishop as poorer than they are. Once, by chance, happening to be in the office of my Lord Bishop, I was witness of the following colloquy between the secretary and a cunning country fellow. He entered dejectedly, as a man desiring to be set at liberty, dressed almost in rags, the better to deceive him, and looking nearly a beggar.

"Sir," said he, "I wish to marry, but I want a dispensation; my future bride is my cousin."

"You are rich enough, I suppose," answered the secretary; "for a man who marries is always rich;" an ecclesiastical maxim.

"Oh no! Sir. Rich! Look at my dress! On the contrary, I am very poor. I do not know where I shall find money to pay the notary, the curate," &c.

"My good fellow, in consideration of your poverty the price will be only thirty dollars, (one hundred and fifty francs); the just price is sixty dollars. But if you become rich you will indemnify the Church, will you not?" The poor fellow had only heard those two words, "thirty dollars."

"Sir, is it possible? Shall I then steal them, that I

may be able to pay you? My whole fortune is not worth thirty dollars."

"No song, no supper! (*pas d'argent, pas de suisse*)."

"But, Sir, let us come to an agreement. If I give you twenty dollars, I am a ruined man; but no matter, I proffer them to you. Will you have them?"

"No; I cannot. Do you mock me with cheapening?"

The fellow started and went to the door. "You lose your fine," said I to the secretary. "You do not understand that," replied he; "wait." The future husband came back.

"Sir," said he, "twenty-five dollars, will you? I will borrow five dollars to pay you, for I have but twenty of my own."

"No more. Thirty or nothing."

At length he drew out a leather purse, and sighing outwardly, he laid down his thirty dollars. Being possessed of his paper dispensation, he said, laughing—"You just told me that it should have cost me sixty dollars had I been rich; then these rags have gained to me to-day thirty dollars, for if you come to see me at my nuptials you will see that I will not look so poor as to-day. Thank you, Sir, farewell." He was glad at having paid only thirty dollars for a sheet of paper worth three cents! When he was out, I said to the secretary—"You are cheated, but it is still dear enough. What will become of this money?" He answered—"We hoard it for pious works (*œuvres pies*), but in reality it is for the expenses of my Lord. Do not speak of it."

In the same city, a gentleman who loved his cousin asked the price of a dispensation, and was told that it was only a hundred dollars. "Well," said he, "I will pay them." The matter went on, and on the eve of the publication of the banns, he called for the indispensable dispensation. It was no longer an hundred, but *two hundred dollars*; "because," said the secretary, "we have heard that you were worth two thousand dollars a-year." The indignant gentleman answered—"I will pay the one hundred dollars because I have promised it, and it is not my practice to break my word; but I will not give a farthing more. Or better, I will be married only in the mayor's house, and not at all in the church." Now that is a horrible crime in the eyes of the clergy, because there is no need of a dispensation, and of course no money is received by it. "After all," added he, "I do not see why two hundred dollars, or any money at all, will legitimate my marriage." The secretary, alarmed, consulted his lordship, and gave the dispensation for a hundred dollars.

These fines are so strictly required by the bishops, that if by chance the curate, who performs the marriage, is cheated by the husband and not paid, he is obliged himself to pay the bishop, with his own money, for the dispensation. This case took place many times in my diocese.

Every thing is vendable in the Catholic Church; for example, *to marry during Lent*, it is very dear; *to have only one*, instead of *three*, *publications of banns*; *to post-*

*pone for some days the baptism of a child ; to have a chapel in one's castle or house ; to receive each of the eight ordinations of the priesthood ; to receive one's power as a curate, as a priest, or as a vicar, &c. it is necessary to pay.*

Besides all those ways of obtaining money, the clergy have many others which I have not room to enumerate. With this axiom, that the Catholic has two homes, one here below, the other in the next world, priests work wonders ; for they teach that all that people give to the Church or to them is sent to the other home, changed into spiritual good, to wait the arrival of the donor. To support this doctrine, the Bible is quoted—"Facite vobis amicos de mammona iniquitatis,"—"Make to yourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness." The Jews are said to have invented exchange bills to transport their riches from country to country in time of Popish persecutions. But their celebrated invention is nothing, if compared with the Catholic bank, through the channel of which priests engage themselves in sending your goods to heaven, by taking them for their own use. In exchange for them, they give you prayers and indulgences. You must esteem yourself too happy in such a bargain.

Benedictions of every kind are a tolerably good spring in the ecclesiastical soil. A benediction, in general, is the operation of a priest calling upon something the regard of heaven, or driving from it the Devil. Every object in the world is liable to a benediction ; goods, drink,

fire, clothes, bed, water, salt, &c., must all be blessed, that the Devil may be driven from them. I have heard of a country curate who made a barrel of holy water an indispensable matter to bless a lime kiln, and prevent it from bursting; and of another who blessed a dunghill, to employ it in extinguishing a large fire. The benediction of the nuptial bed, formerly, was a very odd affair, as it may be supposed; and among others, now, that of a mother after child-birth is productive to priests.

From all that has been said, one sees that a great consumption of holy water is made. It is the indispensable matter of every benediction. Therefore each priest has the power of making it, and it is made with long prayers, admixture of salt, and many signs of the cross. Holy water is the great foe of the Devil; he fears it so much, that he scarcely approaches a place or a person sprinkled with it.\* The priests commend to Catholics

\* When a person possessed by the Devil is sprinkled with holy water, he becomes very uneasy. A pleasant story is told illustrative of this point, but *I do not warrant it*. A priest, who was accused by his parish of being a bad parson, said to his bishop that his parishioners were possessed by the Devil, and did not know what they said. He gave for proof that they could not endure the holy water. The bishop answered—"If you prove this, I will believe you." His lordship went the next Sunday to the church of this curate, who having before-hand filled his holy water sprinkler with hot water, threw it briskly at the face of his parishioners. As the burning drops fell upon them, they naturally made wry faces. "See, my lord," said the priest, "their grimaces at the holy water. It is evident they are already the prey of the Devil." "True," said the bishop, "we must exorcise them." This recalls to my memory the story of the unfortunate Urbain Grandier, to whom a priest

a daily use of it. At the door of the churches are fonts of holy water, with which every body makes the sign of the cross, at entering, to purify his soul. At the bolster of good Catholics there is to be seen a small pot of holy water, which is sprinkled on the bed before sleeping and at awaking. In my fights against myself, I have sprinkled my bed with more than twenty bottles of it, as I did not spare it; but I did not feel any help from it, save that when, by excess of piety, I had poured the whole font into my bed, in the winter it was much cooler than usual.

Holy Saturday, the eve of Easter, is the day par excellence, the great feast of holy water. It is made in a great ceremony too long to be described. It is curious to see, after the ceremony, the country women searching carefully the drops of wax fallen in the baptistry; they keep them as treasures, for they cause their butter to be the best, and they preserve their houses against sorcerers.

presented a heated iron crucifix to kiss, which he naturally dropt; this was taken as a mark of his being possessed, and so he was burnt.

The great property of holy water is, that it neither corrupts nor diminishes in a vase. "Here," said to me once, a very pious priest, "with my holy water pot I defy all the arguments of Protestants against our religion; here is a perpetual miracle. My pot is always full. Evaporation has no power over it."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*Despotism of bishops—Slavish submission of the priests—The spies of the bishops—Denunciations—Stories—The visit of the bishop to the priests—To the nunneries—Gorgeous feasts.*

EVERY body has heard of the tyrannic power of the sultans of Constantinople, of the deys and beys of Egypt and other despotic governments. It is a true image of the boundless authority of a Romish bishop over his priests; with this difference, that those *temporal* tyrants have their laws, or something like them, while the bishop has no laws at all save those of his own will. His *will* is the supreme rule, not for life indeed, but for situation, living, interdiction. A French bishop is the only and absolute master of his priests; he can displace, cashier, deprive them of their position, and consequently of every means of existence; because a priest receives pay neither from the state nor from his parishioners when interdicted by the bishop. Moreover, an *interdicted* curate is looked upon by every body as a monster, whatever the cause of interdiction may be; whether just or not, whether the result of a crime or of the whim of the Superior. An unfortunate priest in this position is dishonoured for ever, branded in the eyes of a prejudiced society, like a galley-slave. If the bishop would

interdict only those who deserve it by infamous conduct, this display of authority would be very just, but unluckily it is sometimes quite the contrary; and I have seen priests reduced to fly from the eyes of their fellow creatures simply because it was the will of my lord to dishonour them for some mere trifle. This disgrace is almost always impressed upon the culprit, more by particular circumstances, foreign to the accusation, than by true justice. The reader conceives, that owing to this terrible weapon in the hands of an all-powerful Superior, all the priests in a diocese, commonly from six hundred to twelve or fifteen hundred in each, are the slaves of the bishop. They are like threads in his hands, and he moves them as he pleases.

This despotic institution is very politic, for the government knows well the influence of a priest in his parish, and as government is the master of the bishops, *whom* it pays *quarterly* through their means, it has an immense authority over its subjects. Priests are the puppets of the bishop, and he himself of the state. By the salary which it gives to both, the government is their absolute master, because it deprives them of this salary when they do not favour its schemes. This occurred many times in the beginning of the Revolution of July. Few institutions, if any, are more inconsistent with the liberty of the people; for the simple reason, that the priests being already enemies of liberty by their *interests*, their ecclesiastical constitution, education, &c. are moreover the tools of a government that pays them, that deprives

them of their income if they do not comply with all its designs. The great mind of Lafayette perfectly well understood this state of the matter when he said, "The freedom of Americans could be destroyed only by the Catholic clergy." Napoleon also, when by the "concordat" or treaty of 1802, between the Pope and the French Republic, re-established the priests in their functions, he knew well that they were the best support of authority ; and they were, during the whole time of his tyranny, his most humble slaves. They inserted in their catechism a new chapter, (the work of Duvoisin, Bishop of Nantes, a creature of Napoleon,) recommending to boys the most absolute obedience to Buonaparte, because he was the deputy of God. He tried also to make the Pope himself his instrument, but he failed, as Pius wished to retain for *himself* his own power.

There is, therefore, no temerity in saying (founded upon the authority of twelve centuries, upon the history of Europe, and of all the countries ruled by Catholic priests) that freedom and the Popish clergy are two great foes at perpetual war ; and that wherever the latter is powerful, the former is necessarily smothered.

But my design is to speak in this chapter of the tyranny of bishops over their priests. As soon as the bishop has ascended the episcopal throne, the general submission, the slavish obedience, the absurd flattery he meets with every where, turn his head. Nothing is more true than this proverb : "honores mutant mores,"—"honours change manners." Sometimes before his *exaltation*

he was a good companion with his fellow priests, a merry drinker with them, &c. ; but now he is " my lord," he thinks he is obliged to shut himself up in a species of sanctuary, where he is scarcely visible ; he is persuaded that he has become of another nature, superior to the common nature of men ; in short, he imitates the Pope as much as he can. He looks at his priests as at his servants ; and I remember, with a kind of anger for our baseness, that we never approached our bishop without all the signs of the most absurd submission and veneration. We were obliged to pay to him more respect than to the church, for in the church we were allowed to wear a little cap ; but before his lordship we were obliged to *take it off*. When we spoke to him, we used the titles, " My Lord ; yes, my Lord ;" " your Lordship ; " your Highness," &c. Avoiding to speak to him in the second person as too *familiar*, but making use only of the third : " Will my Lord give me this leave ?" No one priest would dare to contradict him ; so far from it, every body is careful to applaud him, to listen to the least of his words with great attention, to laugh when his Lordship deigns to laugh, to blame, to praise, what he blames or praises. It is a great honour to be spoken to by him, and priests boast of it as of a mark of glory : " My Lord has spoken to me !!!"

In our ordination to the priesthood, besides our vows of poverty and celibacy, we take that of obedience, of absolute obedience to him and to his successors. We make this promise kneeling before him, our hands in his

hands, as in old times knights swore faith and homage to their sovereign. His Lordship knows well how to take advantage of our simplicity by reminding us of this vow on occasions. "Remember your promise of obedience." In general Bishops and Superiors affect in their public conduct a great horror of lasciviousness, (whatever their own corruption carefully concealed, may be; I do not judge it); and enjoin upon every priest to denounce to them the criminal, if he can be discovered by any means whatever. All this is for form's sake, for *appearances*; because they *know* that there are few, very few priests faithful to their vow. They have two methods equally base, equally worthless and jesuitical, by which to know the disorders of their priests. The first is by the confession, the second by spies.

This is the first. The confessor, to whom a woman avows guilty relations with a priest, compels her to give him the name of the guilty, and at the same time to grant him leave to tell it to the bishop; this leave of the penitent is necessary, it is said, otherwise the *sacred* seal of the confession would be violated. Commonly the woman refuses at first, but every woman who goes into the confessional is at the disposal of her confessor. He preaches to her, represents the grievousness of her fault; he says that the only way of atoning for it is to cause the guilty priest to be punished; he refuses her absolution till she has obeyed. Vainly would she apply to another, he would follow the same rules, being a pupil of the same school. To diminish her repugnance, there is

another way. Her confessor says to her: "Write a letter, in which you shall put the name of the priest without your own: you will seal it and give it to me, and I will send it to the bishop." The woman, frightened with his threatening of the possession of the Devil and of hell, yields to his orders, and the name is betrayed.

A *single week* does not perhaps pass without such a denunciation to the bishop. If the denounced priest is remarkable neither for his talents, nor his birth, nor his riches, if his fault is somewhat public or known, he is severely rebuked or interdicted. But bishops do not indulge in interdictions as much as they would, because it is a public scandal, which throws a disfavour upon the general fame for holiness of the clergy. Therefore interdictions, compared with the misconduct of priests, are rare. I repeat, that the man thus reduced to poverty and disgrace, is a victim of opinion and circumstances; for there are few, if any, curates who do not deserve the same fate for the same fault. But as Montesquieu says in his *Persian Letters*, that Frenchmen have some houses for madmen, that it may be believed that all their madmen are shut therein and that none are without; so the bishop interdicts occasionally some priests, that every body may think all the bad priests are interdicted, and all the others are very good. This conduct of the Superior, if it is wicked and worthless, is by no means foolish; and agrees well with the general principles of the Catholic clergy—"keep appearances."

If for some reason, the bishop does not judge proper to interdict, he changes the residence of the curate when he becomes scandalous in his parish. Many of them thus run over all the parts of a diocese. It happens more than once that the denunciations through the confessional are groundless, being only the vengeance of some person angry with his priest. People understand well this manner of annoying a priest, and it often occasions the most singular blunders; for the bishop, persuaded that almost all his priests are guilty, scarcely ever examines into denunciations, but gives immediately entire confidence to them, and acts according to circumstances. I will relate two cases in illustration. The first is but pleasant in its end, the second is a sad proof of human wickedness. These two facts (which I warrant, for *I know the persons*,) will show better than my reflections the true interior of the clergy.

In my own episcopal city a young man had a quarrel with a vicar, he therefore resolved to take vengeance on him by means of denunciation; for this purpose he addressed himself to a woman of questionable character, and for a small sum of money he prevailed upon her to denounce the vicar as having endeavoured to seduce her. She fulfilled her commission without having spoken to the priest, or even knowing him. But it was enough to say to the confessor—"Such a one made me improper proposals." The bishop, warned of this pretended crime by the confessor who received the deposition, called for the vicar, upbraided him severely for his conduct in the

great council of the bishopric. "But, my lord," said he, "I beg leave to answer, that I do not know what his lordship means. God is my witness that I am innocent of this crime." The angry and violent bishop said to him—"You are insolent: you must submit yourself: pride is always a sign of guilt. Were you innocent and humble, you would say nothing, and you would submit yourself to your Superior. Am I not your Superior? Are you not *as a worm* beneath my foot, which I could crush at my will?" and in so saying, his lordship strided proudly over his rich carpets. The poor culprit was not allowed to utter a word while the council deliberated upon his fate. At length, one of the grand vicars, less proud than his master, arose, and said to his lordship—"My lord, may I be allowed to say, that perhaps it would not be useless to call for the informing female. I suspect some error." "No matter," said the bishop, "he is guilty. Are you not?" said he to the priest; "avow it—it will be sooner over." "I cannot lie, my lord; I am innocent." "He is obstinate," replied the bishop; "let us call her, but you shall be interdicted if convicted by her." The denunciator confessed, he gives the name of the woman whom he knew; she comes to the episcopal palace, and is requested by the bishop to speak to the priest who had attempted to seduce her. Judge of her consternation at not knowing him, and the triumph of the accused, who stood motionless among the grand vicars. "Are you dead," said the bishop to her, "or dumb? speak to him, and

let us finish this scene." At length, after having looked at each assistant with a visible embarrassment, and willing to get rid of this step, she trusted herself to chance, and made the finest blunder in the world. Instead of applying to the accused, she singled out a young grand vicar, who became as red as hot iron, and very angry, as it may be supposed. The venerable Chapter, the bishop at its head, were greatly disappointed. Then the accused priest went to her, and said—"Where have you seen me? where have I spoken to you?" "Never, Sir; I must avow that I received money to accuse you; I beg your pardon, for my conscience reproaches me with this very much, and I am happy to be able to repair my fault." The shameful bishop said to him coldly, "If you are innocent of that crime, you are not the less proud on account of it; you ought to submit yourself, and not be so presumptuous as to speak so boldly to your bishop and prelate. Go, and be wise for the future." Thus ended this meeting, and his lordship was complimented for the wisdom and rare capacity he displayed in the administration of his diocese.

The other case had nearly a tragical end. A curate and a lady loved each other as friends, but their friendship was quite free from evil, I am almost certain of it. They wrote to each other very often, and they expressed in their letters how happy they would have been if married, and had he not been a priest. These relations having lasted some time, the curate was sent to another extremity of the diocese. Before leaving, he paid a

visit to his friend, and as he was an experienced man, knowing well his fellow priests, he endeavoured to cause her to destroy his letters, but could not succeed; he stopt his correspondence, for he feared that it might be delivered to the bishop through the confession; hitherto he had been her confessor, but his removal prevented him from being so any longer. In the meanwhile the lady gave herself up to the highest devotion. It is the custom of many ladies in France, who, in their youth enjoy all the worldly pleasures of a society very little restrained, thus to give themselves up afterwards to the most ridiculous piety when beginning to grow old. They withdraw from the world when they can no longer figure in it, and then follow, with the same ardour as they before followed balls and dances, &c., all the devotions and superstitions of the Romish Church. They are not only the greatest and most solid support of priests, their right arm, but also their burden in confession, which they use and abuse. These women are well known in France under the name of "Devotees," and are ordinarily laughed at for the narrowness of their minds and their practices. They would think themselves lost for ever if they did not assist every day at least, at three or four masses, at each benediction, discourse, service, &c.; if they did not attend at confession twice or more a week; and if they did not receive the Lord's Supper every morning. They are the leaders of all the religious business, to the detriment of their family, (if married,) which they neglect, as they say, for a more perfect

duty. If priests want money for any pious or ostensibly pious design, they have recourse to their kind devotees. But I perceive that my digression goes too far.

The lady of my story having turned a devotee, conceived, of course, a great horror of her previous conduct. She made a general confession of *all her life*, a practice warmly enjoined upon every one who begins a *new life*, that the confessor may *know him* or her better. She possessed yet the letters of her friend. What a crime! She confesses it; the accustomed method is put in practice; the confessor requires those letters, and, not to affright her, he says that nothing hard will happen to the priest whose they are; that it is only for form's sake. Moreover, he promises that they should not be delivered to the bishop. They are given to the confessor after some difficulty, and of course they pass from his hands into those of the bishop.

He became more furious against this than the denouncement of incontinence, of which he was daily hearing. But as the priest had said in the above-mentioned letters that he was unhappy in being a priest instead of being married to her, the bishop was storming with rage. "What! in my diocese," said he, "have I a priest who speaks of marriage? The vicious man!" A fulminating letter is sent to the poor curate, to call him to the episcopal bar; he appears before his angry and all-

\* Thus an abandoned woman, who for long years has been given up to the most shameful disorders, is obliged to relate every detail to her confessor if she afterwards goes to the confessional.

powerful master, and avows all the truth; he acknowledges the letters, and ventures to say in his defence, that it is his whole guilt. "The Devil has blinded you," said his lordship; "I will teach you to judge more correctly of the enormity of your crime; my only regret is at not being able to punish you as you deserve; you are deprived of your situation and interdicted; you will return in penance into our seminary for nine months; afterwards we will see what will become of you. Begone! and let me not see any more a Luther, a Calvin who is impudent enough to speak of marriage."

The unfortunate vicar saw his former friend, and reproached her with his sad fate. When she understood fully all the extent of it, she conceived so great a grief that she fell unto a dangerous disease, and nearly died of a broken heart. I presume this event enlightened her on the probity of her confessor.

The other manner used by Superiors to know the misconduct of the priests is by spies. Spies pass every where for the dregs of mankind, for the scum of wretched men. They are, perhaps, worse among Catholic priests than any where else; because of their natural wretchedness, they are the most hypocritical of men. But the trade of a spy is so profitable, that power seldom lacks those who are willing to become its agents. Commonly the spies of the bishop are the lowest of priests, who, having been either interdicted or denounced, desire to reconcile themselves to his authority by their services; as the French government chooses its spies among those

men who have been galley-slaves. The ecclesiastic spies are known only by the bishop and his grand vicars, and often each has his own. Before their Superiors they never speak but of *religion*, holiness, piety, power of the Church, obedience to authority; they sigh over the disorders of the times, lament over the misconduct of so many priests. Owing to this hypocrisy, and to their denouncement of other priests, whose reputation they spoil when it is necessary to their purposes, they obtain the best situations as a reward.

The bishop scatters them among other curates to watch their conduct. They affect a great liberty with their fellow priests in their words and general conduct, that the others speak freely before them. In this way common priests, especially after great dinners, speak without restraint upon every matter,—religion, or morals, or discipline, as I have stated in speaking of their feasts. Spies take hold of these indiscretions, pervert, and put a malicious construction upon them, and send them to the bishop. Therefore, such a curate is quite astonished at receiving an awful letter from the prelate, in which he is severely taken to task. In one of those meetings before a spy, whom I knew not, I was so imprudent as to say that there were some things in our religion very hard to believe, and not clearly founded on the Bible; for example, confession. "For," added I, "it is not said that ever Jesus Christ or his apostles confessed any body." Soon after, frightened at my boldness, I said that I was not able to understand the Scriptures, but that our holy

Church was charged to explain them to me. This Jesuitical and wise restriction did not save me a sharp notice from the bishop.

This institution of spies spreads distrust among the priests, and in general they do not meet together freely and confidentially without knowing well each other; therefore their societies are full of parties which are almost enemies. There are especially the party of *episcopals* and that of *anti-episcopals*; the former is composed of the friends of the bishops, who flatter him, the latter of free-thinkers and independents.

The best occasion on which bishops can display their authority is on their episcopal visit to each parish, church, and its dependence. On the arrival of his lordship at some village, the whole population, the trembling priest at their head, go to meet him with the cross and pavilion. The curate is obliged to address to him a speech of the most fulsome praise and flattery, which the bishop, under the pavilion, as the host, swallows with a grave countenance. His lordship stops at the house of the priest, together with two grand vicars, a secretary, two servants, and his horses. He remains at each one's house several days, during which he is pumping his host.\* He visits at first the church, and examines every little object; the ornaments, books, desk, confessional, pictures, statues, prints, &c. and all the furniture of the Popish service. The poor priest follows his master every where, very

\* It is needless to say that the servant-maid of the vicar is *absent*, if she is young and pretty, that the bishop may not see her.

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humbly expecting some reproach, which does not fail to fall upon him in the eyes of the whole gathered parish, indignant at seeing their priest so ill-treated.

However, the curate must exhaust his resources to make the greatest dinners to the bishop, to buy at great expense all that is rarest and dearest. If he did not do so, the bishop would be furious. The whole afternoon devoted to feasting. What a consumption of good wines, spirits, cakes, pies ! All the neighbouring priests are invited, and each comes to offer his most humble respects to his Lordship, who, if satisfied with the dinner, praises it, and the visitation, &c. and deigns to be somewhat gracious. But if displeased, he displays the most churlish temper, the most disgusting scorn towards every body. When he has eaten his host out of house and home, his Lordship, with his attendants, grand vicars, secretary, and horses, sets out, and goes to practice the same operation at another parish. Doubtless, if the priest had not inexhaustible resources in his holy ministry, he would be reduced to fast for some weeks to cover the expense of such a visit.

The visit of the bishop to the convents of nuns are yet more curious. This is the delight of the bishops. Cloisters are their houses, they say, their paradise ; here they are at home. Let it not be thought I mean any disorder, for about that I can say nothing truly, because I know nothing. The good nuns receive him as they would receive our Lord himself ; all is bustling in the house. The dinners and feasts, indeed, of the curates on

such occasions are good ; but if compared with those of the nuns, they are dinners of anchorites. When I was free from my mortifications, it was an agreeable matter to me to attend those dinners with my Lord, for which I cared much less than for the pleasure which he caused. Every nun must individually appear alone before the bishop. Of what passes between him and them at such times I never heard ; only it is said that they speak to him of their conscience and their spiritual life. But I know nothing else.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

*Costume of the priests—Instituted to strike the senses—Severity of their rules—Dissimulation, the natural result of those rules—Stupid causes of excommunication—Priests "sacred beings."*

POPERY, the most skilful power which has ever appeared in the world, pursuant with its whole system of persuading people that all is divine in the Catholic religion, has succeeded in striking the senses of the vulgar by clothing the clergy in a particular dress, which makes the man disappear, and displays but the minister of God. For, the multitude, who never penetrate into the interior of things, who look only at the surface, reason thus :

"These holy men, who have a garb so different from ours, are naturally different from us, above our humanity, above human feebleness."\* To produce this result is precisely the aim of Popery. It is in vain that some men enlightened and less credulous, discovering the trick, have ventured to say that, "under the cassock of the priest there beats a human heart," they have been laughed at by public opinion. For where have the vulgar admitted an opinion inconsistent with their own?

1st. The principal piece of the ecclesiastical garb is a long black *cassock*, which reaches from the neck to the feet, wrapping the whole priest in a species of sheet of a black colour, to show (for every thing is mystical in Popery) that he is dead to the world, and always mourning for the sins of men. It is not a small task to button every morning the sixty buttons of this garment, with which no one can dispense; nor agreeable, nor easy at all to walk with this cassock, which prevents the free use of the legs, and binds as in fetters, to remind them of their spiritual bondage.

2nd. The disgusting *three-cornered hat*, which disfigures a man more than any thing else by its obsolete form. It is the part of his garb which a young priest is the most dissatisfied with, because it makes him old and ugly.

\* This remarkable reasoning is so true, that a country woman has avowed to me, while questioning her concerning her ideas of the clergy, that she believed that priests were not liable to many wants of other men!

3d. The *belt round the loins*, to show that he is always ready, as it is said in the Old Testament, "to contend for the faith;" and moreover, to signify that he is chaste.

4th. A *small black collar* bordered with white, the meaning of which I could only explain by the same mystical sense.

5th. The *small clothes*, which do not reach lower than the knees; for pantaloons are severely interdicted.

6th. The *hair* must remain long and floating behind the head, which by the way gives one the look of an uncouth savage, and moreover soils the collar of the cassock. This signifies that he has renounced the fashion of the world.

7th. The top of the head is decorated with a *little crown*, made by shaving it every week, to show that they are for ever the servants of Jesus Christ.

These are the indispensable accoutrements of fifty thousand priests in France, (except in Paris, where they do not dare all to wear it, since the Revolution of July;) and, what will seem perhaps incredible, conformity to this rule is so severely required, that an infraction of it is punished *more cruelly* by the bishop than the most *secret crimes*. It is as common to see a priest interdicted because he has left off sometimes his ugly hat, or because he has cut his hair off close, as for greater crimes. This is perfectly in the spirit of Popery, to put appearances and foolish practices in the place of virtues.

In no other countries are those rules so strictly executed or so heavy as in France. In Belgium and

Spain, even in Italy itself, a priest is not excluded from the public enjoyments of life, from a decent party of pleasure, from hunting, from concerts, &c. ; but in France all this is forbidden under the severest pains of interdiction, and it is said that this severity is founded on the remarkable regularity of the French clergy, (*lucus a non lucendo*). Hunting, however, is not forbidden in all dioceses, because the bishops, who make the laws as they please, do not interdict it, that they may themselves indulge in it without scandal or opposition to their own rules.

Their lordships, therefore, have always in their mouths the threatenings of excommunication ; and to the infraction of these rules is attached this pain of excommunication, "*ipso facto*," by the fact itself. Thus, a man who says his mass only *once without his cassock*, is interdicted by that act ; whoever *reads a forbidden book*, is interdicted ;\* whoever shall confess those who are not under his jurisdiction, is interdicted.

\* A singular proof of the despotism of bishops over their priests is, that they forbid them reading any book at pleasure, especially when it contains some opinion contrary to the decisions of the Church. This prohibition extends so far that priests can, no more than others, read any part of the work of a man who has written against Popery. This is called an interdiction "*in odium auctoris*," by hatred of the author. I saw once a very odd proof of the absurdity of this rule. I was with a pious priest at a gentleman's, who, upon a discussion with us, brought, in proof of his opinion, a volume of the Encyclopedia, an interdicted book in its whole extent, even in matters foreign to religion. Consequently the page referred to, which treated of flowers, was as much interdicted as the remainder. I, in my superstition, took great care not to look at the book at all ;

These rules produce, of course, two effects. The first is, that the spirit of the priests becomes slavish, without any elevation; brutalized by so heavy a despotism. The second is a habit of dissimulation, of deep hypocrisy; for, in order that they may give themselves up to their favourite pleasures, in spite of the prohibitions of the bishops, they are obliged to have recourse to mystery and to arts of concealment.

The better to support these institutions, and to place priests in a region above that of other men, Popery, with its usual knowledge of human nature, has declared priests "sacred," and called them the "Anointed of the Lord." It has issued a terrible law making excommunication the penalty for striking a priest in any case whatever, and no matter for what reason; and the Pope alone can re-

"for," says our theology, "it is sufficient only to *read six lines* to incur the penalty." My companion, off his guard, read a few lines, fifteen or twenty. When we had left the house I told him he was interdicted; he remembered the prohibition, and avowed that it was so with bitterness. He was obliged to abstain from all the functions of his ministry until he had received absolution from a competent confessor, (for every priest has not this power); and all because *he had read some lines of a chapter on flowers*. Had I been in his situation I should have done like him.

Such is the effect of the imposed costume upon the people, that a priest who would dare to wear *boots* would be pointed out as nearly scandalous, and most flagrantly departing from the true spirit of his profession. I have a personal proof of this fact. Hence, when a priest puts aside his accoutrements, he is so little accustomed to the dress of other men, and so awkward, that he is instantly recognized. A country curate once went to a neighbouring city well disguised, as he thought, but was recognized in a house of infamy, and covered with confusion.

lease from this excommunication. It was founded on this ground, that from ancient times the clergy have refused to acknowledge the authority of common laws or of common tribunals over them. They have refused to obey these laws, "because," say they, "it is indecorous that the men of God should be judged by earthly men." Popery, indeed, is wonderful in its boldness and art. Unluckily for them, this exception is not receivable now; and those heavenly priests are, very reluctantly, forced to appear at the bar of justice like common men, and to undergo the sentence of *earthly* judges, who sometimes, regardless of their cassock, tonsures, and pretensions, send them to prison or to the galleys. However, French politeness has preserved to them a shade of their former privileges; for while other men swear at the bar by lifting their hand, priests swear (it was so before the Revolution of July) by putting their hand upon their breast.

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## CHAPTER XX.

*Reflections—The Reformation and Philosophy—The results of the superstitions of Popery in France—General impiety—Immorality—Literature—Theatre—Sketch of the present Clergy—It is now as formerly—Its inability for good—Hope of amelioration through Protestantism.*

WHILE darkness and night covered the face of Europe, while the clergy through its domination was able to

prevent people from tasting the fruits of the tree of science, the food of its own superstitions was sufficient for the minds of ignorant men. But when the invention of printing, when the Reformation, followed by the bold geniuses who entered into the path traced by Luther, had multiplied and diffused the means of learning, a glimpse of doubt was thrown upon the Catholic Church by its so long enslaved children; the tares were separated from the good wheat, and the spring of the human mind bounded with the more strength because of its long compression. The pure and shining light of a new sun cheered the face of the earth. Human reason, emancipated from its bondage, began to breathe and to soar aloft. In proportion as the Popish laws were looked into, they lost that illusion which had so long fascinated the eyes; like those objects seen in the midst of darkness, which fear or superstition represents to us as phantoms or dreadful beings, but which, seen nearer, prove to be the most common things. Thus far learned and reflecting men have dissipated the vain phantoms created by Popery when not seen with the eyes of prejudice or ignorance, but with those of philosophy and truth. For the happy countries which, favoured by heaven, have profited by the Reformation, a new era of prosperity has begun; but for other countries, remaining in the chains of Popery through peculiar circumstances, is a new era also; but, unhappily, in a contrary sense. This is peculiarly applicable to France. Some men, who by the superiority of their talents were leaders of public opinion in the seventeenth,

and above all, in the eighteenth century, showed an open scorn for the faith of Rome, and overthrew its chief tenets by the irresistible force of logic and sarcasm. Those writers were considered like so many ~~suns~~ <sup>stars</sup>, round which thousands of satellites made haste to revolve as round their centre. These satellites became themselves ~~suns~~ <sup>stars</sup> for others.

In this manner, from the first class of authors, from Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, D'Alembert, to their remotest copier or imitator, to the poorest village schoolmaster, has been opened a vast school of impiety; for those men, improperly called "philosophers," were authorized to include the whole Catholic system in the same reprobation by the grand and capital dogma of Popery; that all its lessons, all its tenets, are of the same certainty, are all equally divine. Such a criminal principle put a terrible weapon into the hands of its enemies; for as soon as they had proved the falsity of purgatory, of indulgences, of relics, &c., they had the right, by a conclusion founded upon the doctrine itself of Popery, to say that there was nothing true in any of its dogmas. Consequently they rejected altogether, with the superstitions of the clergy, the most sacred articles, such as the divinity of Christ, the inspiration of the Gospel, and some the very existence of God.

Gradually it became "de bon ton"—fashionable to believe nothing among a certain class of society. The most glaring impiety became fashionable. The least appearance of religion was a shame. Unbelief was dif-

fused from the highest ranks to the lowest, which last, by a natural vanity, copy always from those above them. Ignorant men, indeed, do not know "logically" why they are unbelievers, but they reason thus—"Such a one is a learned man, he does not believe; I cannot do better than to imitate him." The original cause of this impiety is the revolting falsities of Rome, which, rousing the disgust of able men, have brought upon the work of God the indifference or the contempt of the French, because they have not distinguished between truth and falsehood.\* The result of this general unbelief is a deplorable immorality. When I look at my country, which in "other hands" would have been so enlightened, so religious, so powerful, and see that it has been despoiled of religion (without which no nation can subsist) through the abuse of Popish superstitions, and that it is from day to day suffering by a deep and alarming demoralization, I tremblingly interrogate the future to know its fate. For no one species of faith has taken the place of the Popish faith in the greatest part of France. Many have been eager to tear down the old edifice; but no one has reared any other in its place. The peasantry under the immediate influence of the curates are yet attached to

\* This remark is applicable more especially to the cities, where *women only* have retained some principles of religion. The peasantry is always plunged in superstition. When I speak of impiety, I mean to attach it to the inhabitants of towns; and of the superstitious, I mean the peasantry; two species of men entirely different in France. This distinction is necessary to avoid an appearance of contradiction.

all the superstitions and pantomimes of Popery ; while in cities there remain scarcely any traces of religion. In Paris, for example, the great ruler of the whole kingdom, religion is confined in the churches to a mere theatrical representation, in which priests, sunk in the vices of their time and of their order, endeavour to kindle into life again a dead faith, by their gorgeous pomp, their ceremonies of the opera, their music of the ballets.\* Is there a human heart that would not bleed when, entering those churches consecrated to the God of truth, one sees priests, whose relations with actresses is almost public, playing their parts, doing their best to strike the senses, either of those whom mere curiosity attracts to their "representations," to see and to be seen, or of some pious aged women, who are the only representatives of religion at Paris.

No one cares for the observation of the precepts of the Lord. The Sabbath is a day of labour, quite as much as other days. Even those who suspend their work, far from consecrating their leisure to religion, indulge in amusements and pleasures in coffee-houses, "guinguettes," boulevards, or theatres. As for the rest, a foreigner who, in Paris, would forget his reckonings, could not distinguish at all the Sundays from other days ; for shops are opened, workmen at their work as usual. I never witness a Sabbath in America—the churches

\* The opera musicians are to be heard in the churches of Paris, from whence it has been wittily said of them, that "They breakfast with the church and dine with the opera."

full of men and women worshipping God *in sincerity and truth*—without remembering bitterly the desolation and the impiety of the churches in my own country.

It is an incontestable fact, that Catholicism is dead in France, and dead owing to its own faults ; for had it not spoiled the Gospel, men could never have convicted it of falsehood, and they would never have fallen into such indifference. Catholicism is in France like one of those monuments of Egypt fallen to the ground, of which there remains but some ruins and scattered stones, without any hope of being raised again.

We have glanced at the evils scattered through France by the superstitions of Rome ; let us see what becomes of her, now that, enlightened upon such gross falsehoods, she laughs at them ; let us see the deepness of her wound, the natural result of Popish tenets.

It has been said justly, that “ the literature of a country is the true picture of it.” If, then, we read any of those books called French literature in the nineteenth century, we shall have a just idea of morals in France, the inevitable result of the superstitions of Popery.

Novels are poured out with a prodigious fecundity, and produced by the hunger of some hundred lazy men, who, knowing the wants and the taste of their contemporaries, heap together all the monstrous inventions of a disordered brain, and proffer this assemblage to the appetite of their readers. All those books scattered among my countrymen for twenty years especially, are filled, with few exceptions, by the most indecent pictures

of guilty love, sacrileges, incests, murders, poisonings, crimes of every description, lessons of perversity, of the seduction of wives. All religious feelings are either forgotten or treated with revolting scorn. The sacred ties of matrimony, of virtue, fidelity, probity, are laughed at, always represented as unhappy, while crime is always triumphing.\* And this is the food of minds—of hearts in France. The lady and the servant-maid read *only these books* in their hours of leisure. If you should walk into the bed-room of any woman whatever, what book will you find on her dressing-table? the book which she reads before sleeping, and in the morning as soon as she wakes? The Bible? Oh, no; *nobody has the Bible*. It is some of the infamous romances of Sand, Raymond, Balzac, or Dumas. Such are their moral lessons. The young girl in her academy, who has seen them in the library of her mother during the vacation, will procure them for herself, and deceive the surveillance of her teachers. She will form her heart from those poisonous pages. The young man in his college devours those impure pictures of criminal pleasures, and he dreams but of them to the prejudice of his studies. Thus is informed, thus is enlightened, the rising generation. In order, too, that the poor may share *these advantages*, cheap editions of the same works are printed, and trusted to miserable pedlars, who carry them into the country, and sell them for a few sous to the poor husband-

\* See an excellent article on this subject in Little's Museum, No. for July, 1836.

men, that their daughters, their children, may be thus *enlightened*. Many thousands of these "editions for cottages"—"editions des chaumières" have been poured in every direction ; and one finds them side by side with the book of superstitions of the curate, *alike read* and believed by every ignorant peasant who is able to spell them.

The theatre is perfectly on the same footing, and it brings before the eyes of the spectators, more *vividly* and more *powerfully*, a *real* corruption. In books one *reads*, in the theatre one *sees*, *true seductions*. At first, indeed, they shocked the eyes ; but now, a piece without those real representations would appear feeble and destitute of interest. Husbands carry their wives, mothers their daughters, fathers their sons. The working-man after his day's work goes here with his family, at least every Sunday ; for on that day the higher classes of society abstain from the theatre, too crowded by the *throng* and the lowest classes.

Foreigners, who see or read our theatre and literature, cannot understand the *genius* and *taste* either of the authors or of the readers, or of the spectators. They ask themselves where Frenchmen look for such subjects, such pictures. This question is quite natural in a foreigner. But what will be his surprise when it is answered, that it is the true picture of *real life*. The superstitions which have so long time besieged and filled the minds of the people, have given place to a complete indifference in religion, which has been followed by its natural result,

a general immorality. From Paris to the smallest cities there is every where such a deplorable emulation in vices, in suicides, in murders, that there is scarcely a village which does not increase this sad story. Who has not heard of the horrible murders of Fieschi, Pepin, and Morey ? of the daily consequences of four parties against each other ? of the recent attempt of D'Alibeu and other men, deluded by political excitements, and restrained by no religious feelings ? Esteeming as nothing the most awful crimes, provided they accomplish their aim, they make use of fire, sword, and poison, to succeed. Morality is not founded upon duty, but upon utility or ambition. If, instead of those public lessons of vice, the Bible was *permitted* to circulate among the people, then those guilty men would have read in it this word of God—"Thou shalt not kill ;" and every body would know that it is a crime to kill a king as well as any other man. Young men, instead of dreaming of revolutions to enjoy pleasures, riches, and honours, because they bound their being by the present life, would have seen in the sacred book that it is the duty of a Christian to submit himself to the will of God, the great author of all society. But alas ! the divine book is unknown in France, owing to the perpetual care of the clergy to conceal it, (I had almost said to depreciate it.) None among the people have the Bible, nor do they know what it is, but by some stories detached from it and disposed by the clergy to favour their own designs ; consequently nobody has any other rule of conduct than his own passions. And

can we refrain from deploring such a state of things in a country which, by its geographical position, its influence, and the universality of its language and its books, will thus be for ever a sink of corruption for the world?

For such an evil, what is the remedy? will the Roman Catholic dogmas ever be able to cure it? Every body can answer; for this very evil is the result of the Popish deceptions. Such a plague, indeed, would require all the science and art of a skilful physician, and France "has not any to cure her." We know the nature of the ability, and the morality of its clergy. Shall some thousand *ignorant sons of peasants*, passing, after some appearance of study, to the altar and to the pulpit, be able to enlighten France upon those two grand causes of human misery—ignorance and immorality? Their childhood has been spent among the lowest class, the most ignorant, superstitious families of the peasantry; who cause their boys to become priests that they may eat good soup,\* that they may be rich, and so the supporters of their kinsmen. With this view the lad is brought up, he sees his poor parents occupied in hard labour, and often starving. He judges it to be more eligible to study at the expense of public charity.† He

\* The goodness of the soup of priests is proverbial—"Soupe de requiem."

† In every diocese there are public gratuitous colleges for young men, who devote themselves to preparation for the clerical state, supported by collections from among pious Catholics, and by government. Moreover, these young men are exempted from military service, an immense advantage.

learns how to read and write at the age of twelve or fifteen ; learns some words of Latin, geography, and history. When he leaves the college he goes to his family, which he astonishes by his ability, because his poor parents do not know how to read, and they gaze with admiration upon their learned gentleman. Afterwards he is sent to a great seminary, where his knowledge is completed by poring over theology, by reflecting upon stories of ghosts, devils, legends, miracles ; such as those of Francis Xavier, who, in proof of the possibility of a body's being in many places at the same time, was seen in two ships at the same hour ; of a Jew who pierced a wafer with a knife, and from which blood flowed, as the best proof of the real presence ; of a devil who painted out, and marked with his pencil the priests, who, while in the church, were inattentive instead of praying ; of a woman, who, having a horrible cancer, changed the worms thereof, by her patience, into diamonds ; and a thousand other tales, at which it is not permitted to laugh under pain of expulsion. This single fact gives a just measure of their mind, for all is faithfully received and firmly believed. Besides this, they preserve all their native coarseness of manners and of habit, and when all this is joined with a superadded superstition, and the self-complacency of a man clothed in an ecclesiastical garb, who believes himself a species of God, participating in the infallibility of his divine church, the result is the education of the coarsest, the most ignorant, and the most ridiculous being in the world. I repeat it, can

this boor in a cassock ameliorate the state of minds, even leaving out of the question his immorality, the natural result of his *situation*, and speaking only of his ability ?

It is easy to conceive how Superiors fill the heads of their worthy pupils with the most exaggerated opinion of Popery ; for among the clergy, more even than among common Catholics, there are the knaves and the dupes. Those churls are the blind instruments of the bishop, who does not blush after the above detailed instruction in the seminary, to use, in sending them into parishes, the very words of Christ to his apostles : " As my father hath sent me, so send I you."

Therefore, among such a clergy the spirit is always the same ; and if it does not display itself so fully now, it is owing to the *want of occasion, not to any change in its system*. Instead of labouring to remedy the state of their country, they think but of an extent of power, of influence, of riches, of the domination of their church, of the "destruction of heretics." The cruelty of the clergy, so famous by their horrible persecutions of every religion different from their own, by the torrents of blood shed in its wars, has proved in 1794, 1815, 1832, that its spirit is imperishable. In 1815, above all, after the return of the Bourbons, priests caused the Protestants to be sacrificed to their long-restrained hatred in the south of France. Every day the bishops in their mandatory letters strongly enjoined the persecution of heretics (Protestants), saying it is a sacred duty, the omission of which is a mortal sin. Their predilection

for darkness is the same, because they have more than ever reasons for hating the light, like owls whose eyes are dazzled by the sun. By every means in their power they stop the diffusion of knowledge ; they persecute all schools that they do not themselves teach, calling them inventions of the Devil ; they prevent boys from going to them, or parents from sending them under pain of excommunication here on earth and of damnation in the next world. They are the best support of tyranny, preaching obedience to despots, absolute submission to the authority of the Pope and the bishops ; smothering every spark of freedom in their confessional, in the catechism, and in their instructions. Debased themselves in their minds, in their hearts, in their whole conduct, they are ignorant of the blessings of liberty ; and they propagate only despotism among men. Many hundred of monasteries, convents, and cloisters are, as formerly, the asylums of idleness and ignorance (not to say more) ; where the people are compelled to feed with their labour and substance those pious beings devoted to laziness under the appearance of perfection. At the head of the Popish army are the Jesuits, the most cunning and daring body, the true personification of Popery, *from which it is a capital error to distinguish them* ; a body the true grenadiers of the Pope, twenty times banished by the wisdom of governments, and which always finds some way to creep in again ; a body composed of knights errant, who wander from city to city, from village to village, to spread every where superstition and ignorance

through their discourses, medals, relics, chaplets, crosses, in which they make an immense trade. If the regular and *legal* tithes of the clergy are abolished, they have re-instituted, in many places, collections of corn, wines, wheat, &c., among the peasantry, from which nobody can escape; the payment in return is a dozen of masses piously said. The clergy are so revered, that they can go to their cottages to request gorgeous dinners, and they swallow in a day the substance of many weeks of a poor family. Faithful to its old maxim, that the power of miracles is exclusively granted to the Romish Church, it accommodates itself to the times. In 1826 all France resounded with the story of the apparition of a Cross a hundred feet long, at Migners, near Poitiers in the west, after a long "Mission" of the Jesuits. The Prince of Hohenloe performs every day the most wonderful miracles on lame or sick persons, to whom he restores health or agility. In 1832 the Archbishop of Paris *invented* a miraculous medal against the cholera. There is not a single village that is not blessed with its miracles, its prophecies, and its saint. As in former times, the clergy coin money from masses, indulgences, and relics. These profitable inventions increase by new discoveries, by new accumulations, as the ball of snow increases in rolling. Less free than formerly, on account of the press and of diffused knowledge, the Catholic clergy has added to its native corruption a deeper hypocrisy. Its celibacy, its education, its gloomy relations of the confessional, are an unceasing source of

corruption and crimes. As formerly, priests consume in their scandalous dinners the substance of the poor, the price of masses ; they pass a great part of their life at table, which was precisely the greatest reason of their entering into the ecclesiastical state, and literally "make their God of their belly."

In short, if it is easy to see the ill they produce, especially on the minds of children, of women, and of the ignorant, it is as difficult to discover the utility of this burden of the earth as to find the philosopher's stone. I have given a true picture of the French clergy in the nineteenth century.

I avow it to my confusion, when I was shut within the walls of my seminary I had heard of Protestant ministers, as of ambitious heretics, as of corrupted men, because they were married ; I thought them necessarily either ignorant or dishonest men, because they were Protestant. The young minister of the Church of England, whom I was acquainted with in the south of France, had already altered this opinion, impressed upon me by my Superiors. But since I see the Protestant ministers of the United States, living among them, hearing their discourses, admiring their virtues and knowledge, I remember blushing my former error. I remember at the same time my fellow priests, what I was myself among them ; I make a comparison between the ignorance and corruption of the one, and the virtue and knowledge of the other. My last words, in concluding this work, is an ardent prayer to God, the protector of my country, that

he will send such ministers to irreligious France, instead of the mob of her fifty thousand Catholic priests. Hope is fostered by the prospects which a writer in a late number of Blackwood's Magazine thus holds out:—

“In the midst of the general torment, of unsettled thoughts,” he observes, “and of the absence of all moral convictions which this produces, *the pure truths of the Gospel*, it is consoling to know, are silently and imperceptibly spreading through the country (France). Here then is a speck of hope upon the horizon. We cannot forbear to think that it will grow broader and broader. It is certain, at least, that there has been of late years a great revival of religious zeal and devotion among the French Protestants, and that many of the reformed churches are now making a combined effort with some success, though struggling with many disadvantages, to propagate their doctrine among their Catholic brethren.”

Let us hope, then, that God will prevail over all opposition; and that at length the pure light of the Gospel will shine upon a country, the destinies of which are so closely connected with those of all Europe.



## WARNINGS

*Of a French Catholic Priest to the American People,  
against the Modern Crusade.*

AMERICANS,

*"American liberty can be destroyed only by the Popish clergy,"* said Lafayette. His genius had a glimpse of truth through the veils and deep mysteries in which this dangerous body is wrapped, the *instrument* and *support* of *despotism*, the *natural enemy* of all *freedom*. Among all the warnings given you since the day in which you achieved so gloriously your independence, no one is so well founded and so important as Lafayette's, the hero whose patriotism is dear to every American.

But Lafayette was not a priest. A stranger to the artifices and duplicities of the Popish clergy, he had not penetrated into its interior, into its tortuous windings; he had never been initiated into its secrets, and especially into its *designs* against the religion and independence of the United States. *I* have been a Roman Catholic priest too long a time, time which I wish I was able to blot out of my life; I have been a Popish priest, and I therefore know the interior character of that body of which a stranger perceives only the surface. In reading the profound reflection of the hero of both

worlds, in remembering what I was, what I did, while the slave of my bishop, I thought that my revelations might be useful to mankind.

The confession I undertake, I avow it, will be a painful one to my self-love ; for is it not hard for a man to reveal and to publish his own failings and errors ? to disclose the foolish and criminal designs of a body to which he has belonged ? But grave reasons, reasons of gratitude, have silenced this natural repugnance.

When some time ago I came to seek a shelter under the standard of your liberty ; poor, persecuted by the ecclesiastic despotism of France as I was, without resource or hope, but with dishonour thrown upon my head by a fanatic bishop,\* you received me kindly as a brother, without inquiring about my opinions, state, or religion. What unspeakable ecstasy filled my heart when I was permitted to hear from, and to repeat with millions of freemen, the before unheard, the genuine shout of “ Liberty and Independence ! ”

Among you, I have felt myself revived to a new life, a new blood circulates in my veins while treading with a species of pride your independent soil. In this home of emigrants I forget the Popish tyranny which had buried my body and tarnished my mind ; my soul casts off the shackles of Roman despotism ; it has freed itself from its

\* In my confessions I show the awful tyranny of our Superiors. In France, the great reproach of my bishop against me was, that I did not *teach enough* the Catholic doctrine, (viz. all its superstitions,) and that I was a *liberal* priest.

shameful superstitions ; and now I can, without blushing for myself, mingle with my fellow-creatures.

This is what I owe to you, Americans ; I love to publish it aloud, and my gratitude (a virtue which no Popish laws could ever destroy) for your generous hospitality, is engraved in my heart in indelible characters. If from being a slave I have become a free man, for that I am indebted to you ; if from being a Helot I have found again my rights in society, for that I am indebted to you ; if my future prospects, my existence, and my honour depend no more upon the passions and caprice of a French bishop, who could dishonour me by a groundless interdiction, for that I am indebted to you.

But Providence has put at my disposal a means of paying my debt in part, by pointing out to you an imminent danger, to which your confiding disposition shuts your eyes ; by unmasking a mortal enemy of your liberty, of whom you seem not to think, an enemy in the ranks of whom I was engaged through my ignorance ; I will pay you by unveiling a serpent, which you warm in your bosom, and which, under your indulgence and protection, now prepares its venom and its poison.

Americans, confiding people ; can I better prove to you my gratitude, since I know the plan of the conspiracy, than by crying, as Cicero did to the Roman senators : " Watch, watch ; that the Republic suffers no damage,"—" *Nequid detrimenti respublica capiat.*"

And when I shall have achieved this task, when I shall have fulfilled this mission, may I not be allowed to felici-

citrate myself for having contributed some useful materials to the edifice of liberty. Since I have been among you, I have seen with alarm the giant strides of Popery in America ; and clear-sighted minds, lovers of their country, are not alarmed without cause by its dreadful progress. Nay, a man attacked by a cancer, which gnaws him, which is fed with his blood, which becomes more insatiable from day to day, and gains upon his vitals ; can this man look indifferently at this hideous plague, which devours him and threatens his existence ?

Americans, your cancer is the Popish clergy ; it is the worm which devours, almost unseen, the root of the tree of Liberty, till in the day of storm the least blow of tempest may prostrate it. Will you wait to be on your guard till the tree bends towards its fall, till its withered and faded leaves warn you of its approaching ruin ? God forbid that I should advise persecution. No, no ; persecution is the daughter of weakness, the weapon of tyranny ; and consequently it is unworthy of a free and powerful nation. But behold the advice which I presume to give you, founded upon perfect knowledge of the Romish clergy.

The strength and vigour of the Roman Catholics depend upon their priests ; through them is their only means of annoyance, they are the true column of Popery. But foreigners, Irish, Spanish, Italian, French priests, (why do my countrymen take a part in this impious crusade ?) will never make a great many proselytes in America. But if these foreigners increase their ranks

from your families, enlist your children in order to transform them to apostles of Catholicism, or if you entrust your boys to their instructions and confessions, oh! then Protestantism and Liberty are really menaced, and will decay. Therefore look at the zeal and ardour of the Popish priests. Do they leave a stone unturned to win proselytes from your ranks, to catch your children? It is skilful tactics to carry off the soldiers from an enemy, and to turn them against him. Look at their seminaries and institutions; they do not neglect a single means which cunning and duplicity put at their disposal to gain and seduce young Americans. What a joy, what a triumph, when successful in their diabolical undertaking! What pride, when lately they converted a Protestant minister. Read the stories of their missions in the divers parts of the world,—in China, Japan, America; every where and always the great maxim has been to gain boys, young men, ministers, to fill with them the seminaries, and employ them to convert their own countrymen.

Your duty, therefore, fathers and mothers, is to keep your children far, very far from those dangerous retreats, where they would learn to be wanting in respect to you, because, be it remembered, you are *heretics*; to scorn and hate you, because you are enemies of God, and *above all, of his holy Church*; and lost for ever. Keep them from those nests of despotism, where the pure breath of liberty has never penetrated, where the mind has for food nothing but ignoble superstitions, where the intellect is

overloaded with so heavy chains that, sinking under their weight, it is spoiled of its noblest faculties, it becomes incapable of any soaring, of any generous thought.\* Secure them from those dens of immorality, filled by men of whom the greatest part fly their country to escape the penalty due to their crimes; under appearance of the purest virtue, renouncing earthly pleasures that they may occupy themselves only with the safety of souls and glory of God; but in reality abandoning themselves to infamous pleasures.

Ah! have you not your own schools, colleges, academies, and professors vastly more learned than all the Roman priests? In our Catholic seminaries, what are we taught? In France we are brought up in the belief *that science only tends to pride*; that the deeper our minds are plunged in darkness and ignorance, the more spiritual we are; that is, we are less able to discover the gross lies and superstitions in which we are enveloped. During all my literary and theological studies, I was, perhaps, one of the least ignorant; and yet all my science, after eleven years of confinement, is limited to a slight knowledge of Latin in order to the understanding of mass and the breviary, (which is beyond the learning of a great many;) to a slight notice of arithmetic, geography, and history, usually mutilated and written by Jesuits;† phi-

\* There is nothing in the world so base as the instruction of Catholic seminaries, as every body will be able to judge who has read my confessions. Most of any real knowledge that I may possess I have gained since I separated myself from the priesthood.

† The course of ancient and French histories commonly taught in

losophy of Aristotle, with his obsolete forms of arguments, in Latin; Focardi, Boccardo, Baralipitor. As for theology, the filthy lucubrations of Sanchez,\* Laiman, Liguori, St. Thomas, Collet, Antoine, with all their incumbrances of mental restrictions and distinctions, &c.; a gloomy labyrinth, where the mind is perpetually either in darkness or in filthiness. As for Greek, it has been of late introduced for fashion's sake; Hebrew is here completely unknown; mathematics, every body knows, have been condemned, in the middle age, by the bulls of the

colleges and academies of both sexes, is written by the Jesuits. I learned it from the first volume to the last, (6 vols.) and I know nothing so slavish, so base, so likely to degrade young minds. For example, in the two volumes of the History of France there is not a word, a single word, of reproof against the crimes of a Clovis, a Lewis XI., a Charles IX. St. Bartholomew is not precisely praised, but it is represented as a *measure of caution* justified by the crimes of the Protestants. The revocation of the edict of Nantes is highly commended! Kings are only guilty when they touch the immunities of the Church; people are the slaves of kings, kings those of the Pope. Such is the spirit of those histories; and the Jesuits entitle their works A. M. D. G., viz.—“Ad majorem Dei gloriam,”—(to the greatest glory of God).

\* It is difficult to believe one's own eyes while reading theological books, but above all, the celebrated Sanchez, twenty volumes in folio. His disgusting treatise on Marriage, in two volumes folio, is beyond all credence; and our worthy Superior told us that Sanchez was so pure, so chaste a man, that in writing his books he kept his bare feet upon a table of marble! I do not dare lay down any of his discussions, let him be judged by this specimen; he diffusely examines and weighs if our Saviour could be born of a pig instead of a woman, and after a long discussion *pro* and *con*, he concludes it affirmatively. (*Vid. Sanchez Tract. de Incarnatione.*) This is what fifty thousand young men are taught in the seminaries of *La Belle France*.

Pope as dangerous and diabolical; and although now the clergy do not assign them so perverse an origin, they have banished them from their seminaries, as well as every species of sound literature, poetry, history, natural sciences; in short, that precious collection of knowledge which adorns and improves the human intellect. Here is adopted the famous maxim of the barbarian Omar—"If those books contain what is in *theology*, they are *useless*; if what is not, *dangerous*. Therefore let them be burnt."

It is sufficient in order to be a good priest, to know how to recite one's breviary and beads, obey and command obedience. Let us not then be astonished, that a man celebrated for his wit, has said, with more truth than is thought by many—

" Les pretres ne sont pas ce qu'un vain peuple pense,  
Notre credulité fait toute leur science."

(" Priests are not what a foolish people think them to be, our credulity composes all their learning.") As for me, who have been brought up by them, and passed my life among the French clergy, I do not fear to say aloud, that out of one hundred priests there are not ten capable, I do not say merely of writing their language purely, but even of reading it without fault in the pulpit, or spelling correctly. This astonishing assertion is not thrown out at random and without proofs; it is founded upon all my relations with my former fellow priests. Let any one examine their publications of marriage, their registers; let any one listen to their contemptible lec-

tures in the desk ; and I affirm, that in the greatest part of the churches, one will not find a page read or written without fault. However, of all the Popish clergy, the French clergy is doubtless the most learned ; for the ignorance of the Irish, Spanish, and Italian priests is proverbial.

If the least doubt, Americans, should be raised in your minds respecting this systematic ignorance of the Popish priesthood and its hatred for learning, I should say to you—cast your eyes over Europe, and see what this body has done with it. During those long centuries of ecclesiastical night, the clergy, leagued with freebooters, divided between them people and nations, as in a hereditary succession one divides cattle ; ignorance became an honourable title,\* science a shame ; the clergy forged fetters and chains to the body and mind of human beings, accustomed the people to see in their priests their master sovereigns and despots sent from God to tread upon their necks ; the clergy founded those thousand cloisters, convents, and monasteries, where were absorbed the riches and subsistence of the people ; those convents, of the corruption and infamy of which heathens would have been ashamed ; those monasteries, where it persuaded its ignorant slaves that God had ordered them to fatten with their labour and substance those holy men devoted in appearance to the salvation of souls. The

\* A great many of our public acts bear this formula: "The above-named noblemen have declared they were unable to sign their names on account of their quality of noblemen."—*See the History of France,*

clergy monopolized in the cloisters all the precious fires of science, the remains of antiquity, which should have been kindled into a flame, and have been a transforming light, a blessing to millions of human beings; they shut up the Bible, that great charter of human rights, that sun of knowledge, that code of mankind; they kept the key of all science, and, undoing the work of God, who had said in the day of creation—"Let there be light, and there was light," the Popish clergy said—Let there be darkness; and thick darkness, as palpable as that of Egypt, was spread over the face of the earth; and the priests, enjoying their most glorious triumph, sat securely in the shadow of night. Then they reigned entirely in the souls of men, and could say to the soaring of thought, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther;" then, like that monster who placed his guests upon a narrow bed, and cruelly cut off all which overpassed its scanty limits, the clergy retrenched unmercifully all that was great, noble, and distinguished in man.

Such is the picture which Europe presents during this period: a vicious, slavish, starving people, working only for temporal and spiritual tyrants; a secular and regular clergy,\* swallowing up all the fruit of the earth; kings and emperors, despots of their poor subjects but slaves of the Pope, whose feet they humbly kiss, whose bridle and

\* The clergy is divided into two classes: the curates, vicars, and parsons are the secular; monks, of every description, are regular clergy.

stirrup they humbly hold ; kings\* and emperors, in expiation of the most awful crimes, leading, at the order of a fanatic monk, their armies to Asia, to extend the Pope's dominion at the expense of millions of lives ; kings and emperors receiving from the Pope a blessed sword, to murder their heretic subjects, and adorned with the title of most Christian or Catholic majesty,† in proportion to their submission to the Holy See and cruelty towards mankind.

But why have recourse to history, while we have under our eyes at the present time the evident proof of this sad truth. Look round you ; compare those nations which are freed from the Popish yoke, with those which are yet under it ; compare Italy, Spain, and Portugal, which are crushed by its whole weight, with England ; South America with North America, which *hitherto* has not suffered it. When one sees those beautiful lands for which Nature has done so much, their inspiring sky, the beneficent influence of which Popery has smothered ; this

\* King Louis VII, for a small offence, murdered and burned the whole population (1500 inhabitants) of the village of Vitry, hence called Vitry le *brulé*, or "the burnt." The Roman priest did not find a more convenient expiation than to send him to Palestine, where he lost his treasures, and his army of at least one hundred thousand men, the elite of his kingdom.

† The King of France has the title of "*Eldest Son of the Church*" and of "*Most Christian King* ;" that of Spain, of "*Catholic Majesty*." When the Pope wants the succour of either, his formula is commonly this : "Can the Christian, the Catholic King, refuse his help to his mother Church ?" The commission of how many crimes has this formula obtained ?

soil, formerly so fertile in heroes, and now producing only beggars and lazzaroni, monks and nuns ; when one remembers that the country of Scipio, Cato, Brutus, Cicero, is now spoiled, stained by slavery and brutishness ; that their monuments, the immortal pride of human genius, the work of a giant people, have passed to the hands of pigmies ; the mind suffers and the heart bleeds as we gaze at this cruel desolation. If the souls of those great men could appear again in their dishonoured country, what would they think at the sight of this humiliation to which Popery has reduced it ? Would they acknowledge again the face of their eternal city, which they had made great as themselves ? Who could not be indignant at seeing the Spanish people, with ardent and generous blood, hitherto ignorant, vicious, poor, and enslaved (the fault of the clergy,) notwithstanding the nobleness of their nature ?

O Popish clergy ! What have you done with Europe hitherto ? Depository of riches, of sciences, and unbounded authority, with kings and princes at your command, was it not your duty to enlighten your fellow-creatures, to cultivate their intellect, to favour sciences, and to labour for the well-being of the people, to make them good, virtuous, and happy, and to continue the benevolent mission of the God whose ministers you pretended to be ? The people listened to you as to the oracles of God ; revered you as divine messengers. The fate of the world, the happiness of mankind, were in your hands. Who was ever before trusted with such a

noble commission ? Who ever enjoyed such unlimited power ?

It remained only with you to speak the word, to bring upon earth heavenly felicity ; but you would not.

Instead of it you have been the scourge of the earth, its plague, its tormentor. To those people who relied upon you and your favours, you have thrown fetters ; instead of liberty, you have given slavery ; instead of light, you have given them intellectual night and superstition. In your hands the human race has never been but an instrument of your passions and crimes. Behold these are your deeds. Yes, your intercourse with humanity, like the path of those awful storms which devastate the earth, is marked by desolation, and by the tears and sorrows of mankind. Like the cruel Attila and Gengis Khan, you have been the scourge of God ; your name is inscribed in the pages of history in characters of blood.

Roman clergy, what have you done with France for twelve hundred years ?\* Your crimes, multiplied, raised to their highest pitch and overpassing all imaginable bounds, prepared that horrible French Revolution, the eternal stain of my country ; unheard-of crimes have been necessary to destroy your immoral and anti-social institutions. Your hands, it is true, have not directly

\* For twelve centuries the priests, with kings their tools, had taken possession of lands, riches, power ; had enslaved and starved the people ; at length the lion was roused, broke the fetters which bound him, and devoured his tormentors.

performed the scenes of this unhappy revolution, but they are the fruit of your deeds; let the horror which it excites in the soul fall upon you for ever; it is your work, and yours alone. Roman clergy, what have you done for the well-being of the human race? You have covered the earth with instruments of torture and funeral pyres, where, under accusation of magic or heresy, the best, most learned men atoned for the crime of saying aloud, that you led mankind astray; you have covered earth with prisons, where you immolated those who were obstacles to your designs by their learning and influence.

You bitterly bemoaned the cruel persecutions which the early Church underwent, and the slaughter of her children. Why, then, have you renewed the barbarity of Nero and Domitian with an increasing zeal, which streams of human blood were unable to satiate?

Roman Clergy, say not with your habitual hypocrisy that I slander you: I judge your works. Has not Christ said, that "by the fruit we can judge of the tree," and that "a good tree cannot bear evil fruit?" Say not in your defence that you found Europe barbarous and ignorant. Ah! when Inachus and Cecrops founded their states, they also found a savage people. Did they want twelve centuries to form the immortal Grecian Republics? When Romulus, upon that fair land now weeping its former splendour, where you have set the seal of your criminal superstitions, where Romulus gathered robbers round his cottage, did he and his successors want twelve

centuries that civilization and knowledge might become the lot of the Roman people ?

Why, then, in your hands, has Europe, with the means of light and science, and moreover the examples and works of the ancients to guide and inspire it, remained hitherto in the swaddling clothes of childhood, enriched only with the crimes of a decaying and falling civilization ?

If some parts of Europe enjoy the benefits acquired by some generous voices, who, calling mankind to freedom, have raised the standard of liberty round which they have rallied themselves ; we look at you, and we see your exertions, your bulls, your curses and excommunications, to retain a prey escaping from you : we see every day the effects of your despotism in less fortunate countries where you still maintain your power. If the Reformation has succeeded in rescuing some parts of Europe, we will do you the justice to say that it has not been for want of endeavours on your side to prevent it. But let the blood shed in your cruel struggles fall upon your own heads, like that of the son of God upon the guilty children of Israel.

And a Church, stained with so many crimes, is impudent enough to give her holiness as a sign of her Divinity.\* Doubtless if the crime of having watered earth with human blood, outraged truth, nature, religion, and mankind ; if to crush men to the level of beasts ; if those

\* The Romish Church has four capital signs of Divinity,—Apostolicity, Catholicity, *Holiness*, and the Papacy.

crimes give a title to holiness, Roman Clergy, none deserve this title better than you.

If such is the truth, Americans, if this be a faithful picture of the Popish clergy's deeds and designs against mankind, then mistrust those Roman priests, who come with the name of God upon their lips, but who in their heart meditate your subjection; for their spirit is imperishable. Leave, leave those strolling knights errant of despotism and superstition to run through the world, leave them to sow in the desert their doctrine, mortal to the freedom and happiness of mankind; their theory upon the power, the divine right of kings and emperors. However odious and cruel the yoke of tyrants may be, the Catholic catechism teaches to the youth, and philosophy and theology teaches to young priests, that *the people must humbly submit*. See the catechism of the empire under Napoleon, and that of Poland, where the clergy preach the same doctrine towards the homicide tyrant who, amidst the smoking ruins of Poland, smothered under the foot of a Cossack, says—"Order reigns at Warsaw," yes, the order of solitude and death—"Cum solitudine fecerint pacem appellant."\* Those are the men whom the Popish clergy commands us to obey; those are the priests whom I point out in the work of my confessions. They rove over your country, they mingle in your society, under the veil of religion, to sur-

\* They make a *solitude*, and call it *peace*.—*Tacitus*.

prise your honesty and confidence. Beware; Popery is a great masquerade, a dupe of which I have been.

Americans, when you shall have become tired with your liberty, when you shall envy the fate of Ireland, Spain, and Italy; when you wish that your children and your descendants may become superstitious slaves, introduce Catholic schools; send your children to draw the milk of those mercenary nurses, and a complete revolution will be eventually accomplished.

When you wish that men who renounce the sacred ties of matrimony in order to seduce wives and daughters, as said so justly J. J. Rousseau, let those men bring into your families their inconceivable immorality; for, from the tenderest age, they teach your daughters for the future, force their chaste imagination, their angelic mind, to spoil itself in the mire of their *cases of conscience*.\* If you desire this education, send them to the confessional.

When you wish that those priests repeat to your boys such horrible maxims as these, viz: "*All is permitted to the priests*," "*A man clothed in a cassock cannot sin*," "*All his actions are holy*"—send them to the confessional. If you have a desire to give such an education to your daughters, send them also to the confessional.

\* If I did not fear to shock the reader, I would expose the examination of conscience, which every body, even boys themselves from *seven years of age*, must read over when going to confession. Let it suffice to say, that all the most horrible, disgusting, and unnatural crimes are explained and developed. Every body, upon pain of *mortal sin*, must examine if he ever committed them, and the confessor makes many interrogatories concerning them.

When you wish that your boys, instead of being like yourselves, honest citizens, bringing up their own children in the fear of God, and as ornaments to their country, may become Popish priests, swear an absolute obedience to the bishop and Pope, become ardent preachers of Jesuitism, superstitions and fanaticism. When you wish that they renounce marriage for ever by vow, either that they may expose themselves to those tortures which were my lot during the finest years of my unhappy life, or give themselves up to the scandalous improprieties of the Roman clergy, call in Catholic priests, and trust them with the education of your children.

When you wish that your daughters may be plunged alive into the grave of the cloisters; that your wives, whose modesty I have so much admired, may become the easy prey of those holy libertines, who seek to seduce them through all the means and influence of their dark ministry; when you wish that the peace of your families may be disturbed by the Pontifical decision that "Protestant marriages are invalid," and must have the benediction of a Catholic priest; when you wish that the secrets of your families may be revealed in the confessional; send your wives and children to confession.

When you wish that they learn to purloin secretly your money, to employ it in masses for the sake, in appearance, of your souls and your own conversion; but, in reality, to enrich their spiritual fathers; send them to the confessional.

All this is, in truth, the very way prescribed to us in

the seminary. "Begin your holy work," say our Superiors to us, "by women and children; fathers and husbands will come afterwards swimmingly." But again,

When you wish that your families may be initiated in immoral principles such as these:—"All is permitted against heretics;" "an oath made by a Catholic to a Protestant is not obligatory;" "it is permitted to a Papist to cheat a Protestant;" "lies and infidel maxims, if used for the good of the Church, are permitted against heretics;" then send your children to the confessional.

When you wish to exchange your money for dispensations of Rome,\* your bank bills for benedictions and relics; when you wish to employ your gold in building gorgeous churches, or to embellish them that they may be worthy of their proud occupants; listen to the doctrines of Roman priests.

When you wish that your death-bed may be besieged by them, to extort at your last hour wills in their favour, and donations for prayers and masses richly to be paid for, listen to the doctrine of Roman priests.

When you wish that your President and authorities may hold their power from the Pope,† that he may di-

\* Ecclesiastic dispensations are a leave of doing what is prevented by Popish rules; for example, of marrying in Lent, or marrying one's cousin, eating flesh, &c. All that matter is settled like an account of the custom-house, and is a fine living to the bishop and Pope. The small fees are for the former, the highest for the latter. Singular stories will be seen in my confessions upon this matter.

† Such is the doctrine of Rome, that all power in the world is held from the Pope as the vicar of God. The Pope has the power of annulling the oaths of fidelity towards Superiors, because Christ said to

rect your elections and your government, that an ecclesiastical seal may be stamped upon your press, bibles, and assemblies, call in Catholic priests and listen to their doctrine.

Or if, indeed, you love your religion, your country, and your children ; fathers of families, avoid Roman Catholic priests, equally enemies of all which is Protestant and free.

American women, avoid Roman Catholic priests, who would teach you to throw aside the most beautiful ornament of your sex, to shun and scorn your husbands if Protestants ; priests who will teach you that your union is illegal and void, and your children are illegitimate, because heretical.

Young American ladies, avoid, oh ! I beseech you, for the interest of your future happiness and tranquillity, avoid those *confession boxes* ; *I do know too well their darkness and mysteries*. Listen to this warning ; it is from a priest, but one who is the friend of your sex, your age, and your virtues.

Young Americans, avoid those priests, who will endeavour to seduce you ; you, above all, whose inexperience proposes to them an easy prey ; to enlist you in their

Peter—"I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." In France, they who do not admit this opinion of Rome are called in scorn, "Gallicans," a name almost synonymous with *heretic* in the eyes of a true "ultra-montane," or Roman Catholic.

History is filled with the attempts of the Pope to make use of that power ; the last was against Napoleon.

ranks, to turn you with their immoral vows either to hypocrites or the unhappiest of men.

Americans of every age, of every rank, magistrates and citizens, rich and poor, clergy and laity, by all that is dearest to you, let a single feeling animate you; unite your ranks as in the day of a battle, and if your foe attempts to introduce himself here, to creep in among you, let him meet every where an impenetrable wall; if he proposes to you to exchange the simple and pure faith of your fathers for his fanaticisms and superstitions, your liberty for his thralldom, answer as you would answer if any tyrant should propose to you to surrender your national flag and betray your country.

Such is the duty of every American, however you may be divided. Some ambitious men, I am informed, are to be found among you, hungry for power, who do not blush to make use of Catholics to compass their ends at the elections. Do those men belong to that American people whose fidelity, union, and devotion, sixty years ago, astonished Europe and commanded the admiration of the world? In the days of your immortal struggle you had but one Arnold to betray the noble cause, and his name is dishonoured for ever; and now, Americans, forgetful of their origin, of their duty and country, forgetful of the patriotism of their fathers, of the blood which flows in their veins, buy and beg the very voices of their enemies, of Roman Catholic priests. This only fact is an awful symptom, and proves but too truly that my fears are well-founded.

But perhaps those misguided, ambitious men do not know the enemy with whom they would join themselves. Let them open their eyes then, and learn what true Catholics, and especially what priests, have lately done in the elections of France. The history of past events is a lesson for the present day. When Louis XVIII. in 1819 granted his charter, which gave some rights to the French, all the true Catholics, and the clergy above all, chafed by this recognition of the *people's rights*, left no means untried to violate and distort it, till they destroyed it by the ordinances of July, 1830. During this long struggle of fifteen years, between Absolutism and Liberalism, my fellow priests used all their power to revive their party, especially on the great day of elections. Then our bishops, (creatures of the king,) sent us their circulars, in order to warm our zeal and ardour.

And we, the faithful slaves of our spiritual Superiors, used all our influence—made public prayers for *good elections*; we preached in the pulpit to our parishioners, in the catechism to the boys, in the confessional to every body, that *Liberalism* (or the party of Liberty) was a *guilty heresy*; it was a mortal sin to give one's voice for this party, and we tried by every means to dishonour and tarnish its adherents.\* *The throne and the altar* was the watch-word, was the enjoined text of all our

\* A singular proof of the natural hatred of the clergy for liberty, is that Lafayette is represented by them as a very bad man. In order to judge of this hero's character, it was necessary for me to come to America.

discourses. We required in confession rigorously, from the electors, the name and opinion of their candidates, obliged them to vote according to our direction, under pain of refusal of absolution.\* If electors themselves did not come to the confession, we had their wives and daughters; and we recommended to them that they should employ all their influence to make their fathers and husbands of our party.

The government, which relied upon our zeal, which knew that its interests were ours, instituted many societies of itinerant missionaries. They went from city to city, from village to village, to revive the ashes of Catholicism and preach servitude. They formed brotherhoods and associations of both sexes, in which they enlisted the most devoted knights of their religion and royalism, the most ardent foes of liberty. And (striking circumstance, the best proof of the truth of my observations,) all the deputies named by the country electors were enemies of liberty and of the press, because those country electors were under the influence of curates; while in the cities the electors, more free and learned, chose deputies who were friends of freedom.

\* In the year 1833 the author assisted at the administration of the last sacraments to a dying country gentleman. The origin of his fortune was questionable, and he was a member of the Liberal party. His priest enjoined him, in order to legitimate his riches, to make some donations to the church; but as for his vote, the priest compelled him to call in his family, to beg pardon for the scandal of having given in his vote to a Liberal man, and to beseech his eldest son not to follow his example.

But when our party\* saw that all its exertions were vain and useless, it introduced into the court of Charles X., about 1826, a secret ecclesiastic council, composed of the cardinals De la Fare and De Latil, archbishops of Rouen and Rheims, the archbishop of Paris, M. De Guelen, and some pious laymen, worthy of their holy society. This council, called the *Camarilla*, directed all the acts of government, forced the public functionaries to go to *confession*, required from all the candidates to public situations an attestation of Catholic and Royalist principles delivered by the curate, pressed the unhappy Charles X. to name his stupid ministry of the 8th of August 1829 ; and at length, to issue the fatal ordinances of July 1830. Thus has the Popish clergy lengthened the struggle of liberty, and compromised the well-being of thirty-three millions of Frenchmen ; thus it has divided them into two camps of mortal enemies ; thus, at last, has it ingloriously crowned the long story of its cruelty and oppression in my unfortunate country.

Since the accession of Louis Philip, the priests have kindled again the flames of civil war. They have sprinkled again with holy water the guns and pick-axes of the poor and slavish peasants of La Vendee† and Bri-

\* As I was only a secondary wheel of this infernal machinery, I know not all its secrets ; but these few revelations are true to the letter.

† Every body knows that La Vendee has been devastated by sword and flames, and unpeopled, in its wars excited by its priests against the republic in 1793-4. They attempted in 1830 to renew the same horrors, but Philip has employed the most rigorous and oppressive measures to prevent it.

tagny, to raise them against the popular throne. But this new crime has ended, after some bloody fights, in bringing on La Vendee an army of thirty thousand soldiers, who, at the present time, crush this province, the tool of its priests; and the clergy, seeing that Philip becomes from day to day as despotic as his predecessors, rallies itself round him, and unites once more the *throne and the altar*. Such as these are the men with whom you ally yourselves, Americans; whose suffrages you beg, whose assistance you ask, in your elections; these are the men with whom you would divide the future destinies of your country. I wish you would but look at the history of Popery, and examine and see *if ever a Catholic country has been happy*.

Americans, be united as the stars upon your flag against these Catholics' designs. Open your eyes and see. Popery overflows, invades you, and you are not aware of it; it strides with the steps of a giant to the conquest of your glorious land, and you do not resist it; yea, you stretch out your hand to it. It is awake, but you sleep; it is zealous, busy, and you remain in rest and indolence; like the spider which extends its web, it lays its snares in secret, and you will not perceive it. The result of such a blindness cannot be uncertain. When I see your tranquillity and your security, I can easily conceive their hopes, designs, and triumphs. You will never understand the great importance which the *Pope* sets upon *the conquest of America*. He knows that Europe escapes from his power, and he wishes to indem-

nify himself with the new world. How many times have I heard, and have myself said, that "the light of Catholicism would ere long be out in the ancient continent, *but would be renewed in America!*" Like the sun, which seems to descend below the horizon to lighten another hemisphere.

The Pope is now making a desperate exertion with men and money to accomplish this purpose. That diabolic institution for the *propagation of the faith*,\* (a member of which I was, and which I have increased with my savings) puts immense sums of money at the disposal of the Pope. As in the time of Luther, the Catholics exchanged their weekly offering for some years of indulgence, as formerly Leo X. sold indulgences to build St. Peters at Rome, now Gregory XVI. sells the same good to *catholicise* and *subdue* America. Three centuries have rolled away, and obstinate Popery, without being corrected by the hard lessons of experience, perseveres in its abominable course.

Astonishing prodigy! None in France, among its thirty-three millions of inhabitants, none in this celebrated and proud nineteenth century dares or even wishes to raise his voice against such an immorality.

\* This Association is divided into "decuries," or collection of ten members; "centuries," or collection of one hundred; and "sections," or collection of one thousand. Each member receives indulgences; but the officers or chiefs of "decurie," "centurie," &c., have much greater favours. The feast of this Association is the day of St. Francis Xavier, the apostle of the Indies, the 6th of February, I believe.

On the contrary, every good Catholic groans and sighs bitterly for the blindness of the misled millions of America, is earnest in offering his money for their conversion. Men, women, servants, boys, atone for their sins with the money which passes into the hands of the Pope for the propagation of the faith in America. The letters of missionaries\* are printed in each month, and published every where, at the expense of the selling of indulgences. In those letters, as in the old legends of monasteries, daily prodigies, miracles, visible assistance of God, &c., are stated as a proof of their divine mission. But the Protestants, and above all your ministers, are treated with their usual Catholic charity; your independence and press are treated as the true Pandora box of the world, are shown as a capital obstacle to the complete introduction of Catholicism. To warm our zeal in the seminaries, those accounts are faithfully read daily; and in each year, young priests brought up in ignorance, prejudices, superstitions, and hatred of all freedom, set out with large sums (the price of indulgences) to destroy the *plague* of Protestantism, and ingraft Popery in its stead.†

\* Those letters are carefully reviewed, corrected, and embellished by the directors, and adapted to their purpose, for often they are not fit for printing. I saw one from a M. Bur—, which would have shamed a boy of ten years of age; there was not *a line* without a *fault*. But in the Monthly Review the same letter cuts quite a different figure.

† I was destined myself to be a missionary in North America by my Superiors, who said that my zeal and *talents* would be useful to

So many exertions, indeed, are crowned with some success. Listen to their oracles: "IN THIRTY YEARS HERESY WILL BE DESTROYED IN THE UNITED STATES," (*Annals of Propag. of Faith*). Do you understand, Americans? In *thirty years*. The author of this prophecy is a *grand vicar*, who knows well his resources and means of success. Perhaps this may appear incredible and even absurd. But compare the present state of the Roman religion in your country with its state thirty years ago. If some time since any friend of America had told you that you should see on your soil, convents, monasteries, and seminaries, the asylums of seduction and idleness, you would have laughed at this prediction. Would it have been groundless, however? Your land is covered with those institutions of Catholics, who, under the shelter of your laws, taking advantage of American liberty, give themselves up to the cloister life, recruit their army of both sexes; and you cannot penetrate within those retreats, and their number increases every day.\*

Thus Popery invades you in spite of your riches

the glory of God and the Church. Happily my health prevented me. I sent only some francs for the conversion of souls, which I could not enlighten personally.

\* The following was the state of Popery in the United States in 1835:—1 archbishop; 10 bishops; 300 resident priests, independent of those in the colleges and convents; 300 mass houses, either erected or finishing; 10 colleges; 28 male and female convents; 35 seminaries for youth; 16 orphan asylums, all under the charge of Jesuits or nuns.

learning, and civilization; no barriers, no gates, no seas can stop it.

While in Europe mankind begins to breathe from the Papal yoke, while one hopes that all the exertions of the Pope to assume again his former tyranny will be like the arrow darted by the trembling hand of old Priam, while every friend of his fellow-creatures sees with delight that Catholicism is nearly at an end in many countries of Europe; in America, on the contrary, it seems to grow youthful and vigorous, as in the days of its brightest triumphs. Never, perhaps, in any country has it strided on so victoriously. In America it spreads the same net which has in former times entrapped Europe; that net which a bloody struggle and prodigious endeavours have been necessary to cast off.

What! Shall your beautiful America, which, without passing through the tedious period of childhood or youth, has sprung with one leap to a level with the nations of the old world; which was born great, rich, and fully formed, as Minerva sprang quite armed from the head of Jupiter; shall she be destined to undergo the fatal influence of Popery? Shall the vulture who has gnawed the entrails of Europe for so many centuries, alight on and drain the best blood of America?

The priests are not yet strong enough to engage with you in a pitched battle, to attack openly your institutions, your liberty, your religion, whose existence is incompatible with their designs. It is not yet strong enough to establish among you an inquisition, although

the Pope has trusted the bishop of Charleston with this office, if we believe Mr. Morrissey, a Roman priest. It has not yet obtained laws, privileges, immunities, and exemptions as in Europe, nor made America a large convent; but have they not multiplied those establishments of dirty monks, vicious and corrupted fellows, greedy and ravenous, unprofitable burthens to the earth, the fruit of which they devour? You have already 28 cloisters. It is not yet strong enough to preach an impious crusade against *Heretics*, as it does in France\* daily by the mandatory letters of bishops; to shut your schools where the Bible is taught; to interdict your Bible societies, as it does in my country; but it prepares its means; it creeps, it invades every thing gradually; and the day in which it will feel itself powerful enough to attack you close, the wrestling will be murderous and terrible. The serpent is not yet strong enough to confront the vigorous claws and beak of the American Eagle; wait till it become older, yea, feed it, protect it, that it may devour her.

Americans, your carelessness reminds me of that of those people whom the hollow roaring of Vesuvius could not awaken from their lethargy; they were buried under the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum. You seem to

\* See the letters of all protestant ministers in France, who state the intolerance of the French bishops, and especially of a Mr. Durand, capitular grand vicar of Besançon, who says in his circular, that it is the duty of the Catholic to persecute the Protestant. The reading of the Bible is prevented as dangerous, and Bibles seized are burnt by curates.

wait for the fatal day of explosion. You perhaps charge me with exaggeration. Ah ! when the thundering voice of Demosthenes solicited the attention of the Athenians to the designs and invasions of Philip, the fickle Athenians charged him also with exaggeration, and refused to listen to his advice. The battle of Cheronea and the subjection of Greece were necessary to show them their fatal mistake. When the unfortunate Cassandra foretold to the Trojans the calamities which threatened their city, her councils met but with incredulity : they opened their eyes only when Troy was in a blaze. I give you the same warning, let them not be lost ; let my predictions be not followed by a fatal fulfilment. Your forefathers bequeathed you a glorious liberty, purchased at the expense of their blood ; it is a sacred duty to you to transmit it unspotted to your children. Will you bequeath them the slavery and darkness of Popery ?

THE END.



# BOOKS

PUBLISHED AND FOR SALE BY

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## SELECT REMAINS OF THE LATE WILLIAM NEVINS, D. D. with a Memoir. Price \$1 00.

From the New-York Weekly Messenger.

*Select Remains of the Rev. William Nevins, D. D., with a Memoir.*—"The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance." They erect for themselves a monument, enduring as the throne of God, imperishable as the crown of glory which bedecks the brow of him who is Lord of all. These lights of the world are never extinguished; but while their mortal remains are mouldering in the tomb, the recollection of their graces enkindles in those who remain, a flame of holy emulation and zeal. Such is, and will be the case, with respect to the lamented divine whose honored name stands at the head of this notice. Dr. Nevins was a man of eminent piety and great talent, and though he requested that no extended memoir of him might be attempted, yet it was never likely but that some account of him should be written and published. This has been done, and the usefulness of the work before us cannot fail to be co-extensive with its circulation. The prominent features of Dr. Nevins' character are worthy of universal imitation. His talents and acquirements were superior, his piety sincere, and his wisdom practical. Humility and amiability, diligence and punctuality, were traits acknowledged by all who knew him. He was a powerful writer, and those productions of his pen which appear in this volume as "Select Remains," are "as apples of gold in pictures of silver"—"words fitly spoken." In addition to all the excellencies with which this volume abounds, we are happy to mention the neatness and beauty of its typography, the whiteness of the paper, and the exquisite delicacy of the beautiful likeness of Dr. Nevins with which the book is embellished. We shall cease to mention London books as standards of taste and elegance, if such volumes as this are presented to us from a New York press and bindery. We recommend this work to universal attention.

From the New-York Evangelist.

*Nevins' Remains.*—A Memoir of the late Rev. William Nevins, with Select Extracts from his unpublished writings.

The public were informed, at the time of Dr. Nevins' decease, that his

papers had been placed, by himself, in the hands of Rev. William Plumer, to be used at his discretion. The volume before us is the result, and shows that the discretion has been discreetly exercised. The memoir is brief, in decorous conformity to the expressed wish of the deceased. The selections are mostly paragraphs and short essays, such as Dr. N. was accustomed to write for the papers.

Probably none of our readers have yet to learn the character of Dr. Nevins, as a Christian of rich experience, a pastor of tried fidelity, and a writer of religious essays unsurpassed in our day. To all his friends this volume will be a valuable memento. The publisher has spared no pains in the external appearance of the book, which is equal to the finest productions of the English press. The portrait is very fine.

From the New-York Observer.

*Select Remains of Rev. William Nevins, D. D., with a Memoir.*—This valuable work has just been published by Mr. John S. Taylor, corner of Park-row and Nassau-street. It is a handsome octavo of 398 pages, containing a portrait engraved on steel. About 80 pages are occupied with a biographical notice of Dr. Nevins and extracts from his diary. From 1830 until 1835, they are given in an unbroken series. We have seldom read a diary with deeper interest. It becomes richer and richer in heavenly thoughts as the author drew near the end of his earthly labors. The book consists chiefly of selections from his unpublished writings, which are replete with the purest and most exalted sentiments, expressed with simplicity, consciousness, and point. To all who have read Mr. Nevins' *Essays* in the New-York Observer, over the signature of M. S. it is needless to remark upon the excellence and peculiar charm of his writings, which combine sententiousness and pungency with deep and living piety. The work may be recommended as useful in forming, and strengthening, and maturing the Christian graces.

From the Newark Daily Advertiser.

*Select Remains of Rev. William Nevins, D. D. with a Memoir.*—An elegant octavo of 400 pages, with a spirited portrait from a painting by Inman. The work is in all respects—paper, print, binding, contents—a beautiful memorial of an amiable and lamented divine, whose pure light shone brightly in the church. The memoir is brief and modest, consisting chiefly of extracts from his correspondence with his friends. The "Remains" comprise a great variety of extracts from Dr. Nevins' writings, containing his views on most leading questions which interest the attention of the christian world.

After straining the eye over the full and condensed pages of the popular publications of the day, we experience great relief from the bold typography, open page, and clear broad margin of an old-fashioned volume like this. The publisher has given us a noble specimen of his art.

From the Commercial Advertiser.

*Remains of Nevins.*—John S. Taylor has just published a large and elegantly printed and bound, 8vo, entitled "Select Remains of the Rev. Wm. Nevins, D. D., with a Memoir." The name of the author and compiler is not given, but he has executed his labor with excellent judgment and taste. The memoir is a rapid sketch of the life of Dr. Nevins, for which, although

by no means devoid of interest, it appears that few materials had been preserved.

The "Select Remains" consist, for the most part, of short sketches and fragments of compositions, devout meditations, reflections, &c. upon a great variety of religious and moral subjects, with a collection of select sentences, aphorisms, &c. &c. found scattered among the papers of the deceased. Among these are many bright and beautiful thoughts, and the whole work is interspersed with such a rare spirit of meek and gentle piety as is but seldom to be found in the compositions of the best. He was a man who almost literally "walked with God."

From the American Citizen.

*Select Remains of the Rev. William Nevins, D. D., with a Memoir.*—This work (to adopt the language of the Newark Advertiser) is, in all respects—paper, print, binding, contents—a beautiful memorial of an amiable and lamented divine, whose pure light shone brightly in the Church. The memoir is brief and modest, consisting chiefly of extracts from his correspondence with his friends. The "Remains" comprise a great variety of extracts from Dr. Nevins' writings, containing his views on most leading questions which interest the attention of the Christian world.

The volume is an octavo of 400 pages, is printed on large open type, has a spirited likeness of the subject of the Memoir, painted by Inman, and engraved by Paradise, and is otherwise well "got up." Though Dr. Nevins died young, his fame (if the word may be pardoned) as a preacher and writer, was wide spread, and we cannot but trust that the good taste and liberal spirit of the publisher, as evinced in this instance, will be duly appreciated and rewarded. Indeed, the public—the religious public especially—are much indebted to Mr. Taylor for their previous acquaintance with the author of these Remains, through the "*Practical Thoughts*," and the "*Thoughts on Popery*," the first of which works is every where read with pleasure, and both, it is hoped, with profit; and they have doubtless prepared the way for the favorable reception of the present volume.

Dr. Nevins wrote much, and all who read, will acknowledge that he wrote well.

From the Evening Star.

*Select Remains of the Rev. William Nevins, D. D., with a Memoir.*—The subject of this memoir was a pious and unpretending divine, in possession of strong faculties and many great virtues. His life was one of great usefulness, and much of his time devoted to the relief of the distressed and the alleviation of the misfortunes of his brethren. The style in which this work is sent forth deserves the highest commendation. The type is large, full, and handsome, and the paper is white, clear and lustrous, and presents a beautiful specimen of typographical neatness.

From the Journal of Commerce.

*Memoir and Remains of Rev. Dr. Nevins, late of Baltimore.*—An intelligent friend who has read this work, (which we have not yet found time to do,) speaks of it as "a beautiful volume, and as useful as it is beautiful." He adds—"The Memoir is prepared by a judicious friend of the deceased, whose name is not given, and the Remains consists of short reflections on various subjects of every day utility, for which the lamented author (alas! too soon removed to his reward) was so celebrated. The manner in which it is

got up, is very creditable to the publisher, Mr. John S. Taylor, of Park Row, Chatham street. We need such *aids to reflection*, and we hope our readers will patronize this book, and make themselves familiar with the precepts and example of the worthy disciple of our Savior."

From the New-York American.

*Select Remains of the Rev. William Nevins, D. D., with a Memoir.*—The life of a pious, unpretending, and zealous Clergyman, offers little out of which to make a book suited to the popular taste—but affection loves to perpetuate the memory of its objects, and affection has ushered forth this volume, beautiful in its materials and typography, and well fitted to instruct, refine, and purify by its contents.

The extracts from the diary of Dr. Nevins present him in a most favorable light, as a cheerful, humble and resigned clergyman—who found in the midst of severe domestic affliction that his religion was a reality, and that its promises were not in vain.

The greater part of the volume is made up of miscellaneous extracts on different subjects, all connected with religion, from the manuscript papers of Dr. Nevins.

From the Philadelphia Gazette.

*Dr. Nevins.*—We find upon our table a beautifully printed octavo volume, entitled "Select Remains of the Rev. William Nevins, D. D., with a Memoir;" and we observe also, a well engraved likeness of the estimable subject of the Memoir. We found time to read only the Memoir and some of the "Remains." We share, we suppose, with most persons the pleasure of reading diaries, auto-biographical sketches, and short memoirs. They open up the heart to the reader, and, as face answers to face in the glass, one finds his own heart beating responsive to the pulsations of his whose experience he is gathering. Dr. Nevins was a man of deep affections—while he seemed to direct all its streams towards objects of eternal interest, there was a swelling up and gushing forth for home and the fire-side circle, that showed how salutary are the touches of religion upon earthly love; the true exercise of the latter being the best evidences of the existence of the former.

The "Remains" are extracts from the sermons and occasional writings of Dr. Nevins, and show a ripe scholar, a clear thinker, and good writer. We commend the book to those who like religious reading—they will find pleasure in its perusal. We commend it more to those who do not like religious reading—they will find profit from its study.

From the New-Yorker.

*Select Remains of Rev. William Nevins, D. D., with a Memoir.*—Rarely have we welcomed to our table a volume so strikingly creditable to the American press as that now before us—a beautifully and richly executed octavo of 400 pages. The matter is worthy of the garb in which it is presented. The divine whose "Remains" are thus given to the public, was a burning and a shining light in the Presbyterian Church, and his decease was deeply and widely felt by his brethren in faith, but especially at Baltimore, the theatre of his labors of love. The volume now published consists of choice extracts from his sermons, his letters, and his contributions to religious journals. It is embellished by a beautiful likeness, and deserves an honorable place in the library of the orthodox Christian.

From the New-York Express.

*Select Remains of the Rev. Mr. Nevins, D. D., with a Memoir*—New-York, John S. Taylor, corner of Park Row and Nassau-street; an elegant octavo of 400 pages, with a spirited portrait from a painting by Inman. The work is in all respects—paper, print, binding, and contents—a beautiful memorial of an amiable and lamented divine, whose pure light shone brightly in the church. The memoir is brief and modest, consisting chiefly of extracts from his correspondence with his friends. The "Remains" comprise a great variety of extracts from Dr. Nevins' writings, containing his views on the leading questions which interest the attention of the christian world.

From the Morning Star.

*Select Remains of the Rev. Mr. Nevins, D. D., with a Memoir*, with an elegant portrait, from a painting by Inman.

This is a most beautiful work. In paper, print, and binding, it exceeds any new work that we have seen. The Memoir is correct and brief. The Remains comprise a variety of the finest extracts from the writings of this eminently talented and lamented divine: several of them are on the doctrines which now agitate the church.

From the American Baptist.

*Select Remains of the Rev. William Nevins, D. D. With a Memoir.* 8vo. pp. 398.

With Dr. Nevins, it was never our happiness to be personally acquainted. But the perusal of this work has left a deep yet unavailing regret, that we should have been contemporary with such a choice spirit—should have dwelt in the same city with him, and it may be, have sided by him in the crowded street, and yet never have seen, and never have known him!

And so will it be with many, now pressing with us for the goal, who, when they have outrun us in the Christian stadium, have seized the garland, and their virtues and their victories have been heralded to the church and to the world, we shall regret that we saw them not, and wonder most of all, that living in the same age, sojourning in the same cities, and perhaps for a time sheltered beneath the same roof, we yet should have let pass unimproved the golden opportunity of enriching our stores of piety and intelligence by an endeared and confiding intercourse.

To us the very sight of a holy man is sanctifying. We love to gaze on his resemblance to his Lord, till we catch his spirit and are changed into the same image! What gainers then might we have been, had we been brought within the influence of a man, a Christian, and a minister, so richly endowed with piety and intellect, and around whom there was thrown, in foldings of such richness and grace, the beautiful robe of humility, as was Nevins! What lessons might we have drawn from his holy walk, his stern principles of integrity, his untiring industry, his various and successful plans of usefulness, and the spirit of self-annihilation which enshrined all in its burning lustre! But we have formed an intimacy with him through his "Remains,"—alas! that the response should be from the grave!—and their perusal has left upon the heart the faint impress of a character, which, in its living influence, must have been peculiarly and eminently spiritual. The "Memoir" which introduces the "Remains," though brief, possesses yet a charm which other and more elaborate biographies can seldom claim—that of permitting the subject himself to speak out the history of his own life and experience—

so that the memoir of Nevins might be justly styled an auto-biography. The extracts from his diary and letters will be read with deep interest—and cold and unfeeling must be the individual who can linger around the touching picture of his desolated and broken heart, mourning over the grave of her who was the wife of his youth and the charm of his life, and feel no thrilling emotion. The Christian, too, who is, as was the departed Nevins, all his life-time in bondage through the fear of death, as he stands by his bed-side, and beholds him with unshaken faith in the faithfulness of God, and listens to his song, though tremulous in death, of joy and triumph, will dismiss his fears, and commit his soul afresh to Him who is able to keep it against that day.

But of his "Remains," what shall we say? We have perused, and reperused, and will peruse them yet again, so elevated in thought, so pure in style, so eloquent in language, and so rich in piety are they. We think, in each of these particulars, they will rank with "Pascal's and Adam's Thoughts," and with "Sear's Christian Remembrancer." By their side, on our biographical shelf, we have placed the "Remains and the Memoir of William Nevins."

The work, as presented to the public by its enterprising publisher, *John S. Taylor*, Park Row, New-York, is a beautiful specimen of neatness in typography, and elegance in binding. Its appearance will vie with any book in this department of literature which we have yet received either from the English or the American press. That the fondest hopes which influenced *Nevins* in writing, *Plumer* in compiling, and *Taylor* in publishing this work, may reach the utmost limits of realization, is our sincerest wish.

From the Long-Island Star.

*Select Remains of the Rev. William Nevins, D. D. with a Memoir—New-York—John S. Taylor.* The gifted author of these posthumous fragments, while in the midst of his deeds of charity and love, and before he had reached his manhood's prime, was summoned from the field of his labors and conflicts to

"Join the caravan that moves  
"To the pale realms of shade."

Perhaps the usefulness of the art of printing is never so forcibly felt as when death suddenly severs a great mind, and extinguishes a flaming light from among the living. THE PRESS seems to grasp and converge the rays that gather over the death-couch of the devoted in piety and strong in intellect and pours them out again in their full effulgence,

"The round of rays complete,"

upon a benighted world. THE PRESS, into the everlasting ear of its memory, seems to drink up the last impressive lesson and parting benediction of the departing patriarch, as he takes his departure to mingle with those beyond the flood, and imparts to them an immortal voice, whereby "being dead, he yet speaketh." Truly may it be said of the lamented Nevins, "being dead, he yet speaketh"—speaketh in the kindness of heart by which he was endeared to the social circle—speaketh by his good works, for which the widow and the fatherless still bless his memory—speaketh in his exemplary piety, which made him a "burning and a shining light" to a captious and infidel people—speaketh in the language of his eloquent teachings and aspirations, preserved in the volume before us, for the enlightenment and consolation of the way-farer on life's bleak journey.

From the Rev. Wm. Adams, Pastor of the Broome-st. Church, New-York.

*Memoir and Select Remains of Nevins.*—It would be difficult to mention a book which does more credit to an author or a publisher than this. The contents are like "apples of gold in pictures of silver."

Who that knew the lamented author, does not see his image reflected from these pages—refined, ornate, thoughtful and spiritual. We see him again passing through his various and diversified trials—prosperity and adversity, sickness and death, and coming out like silver that has been tried. We commend especially the fragments which were written under the greatest of all earthly losses, and in near prospect of his own departure. They breathe the spirit of heaven. Blessed be God for such an exemplification of faith and patience—for this new evidence of the reality and stability of our hopes. He was a burning and a shining light, and many have and will rejoice in that light.

The fragmentary form of these articles will insure frequent perusal. They are the best specimens of this description since the Remains of Cecil; with less of his mannerism and style, there is more of simplicity and adapt- edness to general readers. In a time of haste and little reflection, their brilliant thoughts may arrest attention, and lead others to reflect also.

In unqualified terms do we commend this volume, for the richness of its contents and the uncommon elegance of its form. WILLIAM ADAMS.

**PRACTICAL THOUGHTS.** By the late Dr. Nevins, of Baltimore.

**THOUGHTS ON POPEY.** By Dr. Nevins, of Baltimore.

From the New-York Observer of April 9th, 1836.

The *Practical Thoughts* consists of forty-six articles on prayer, praise, professing Christ, duties to Sabbath Schools, the monthly concert, the conversion of the world, violations of the Sabbath, liberality, man's inconsistency, the pity of the Lord, Christian duty, death, &c.; the last of which are "Heaven's Attractions" and "The Heavenly Recognition," closing with the words, "By the time we have done what I recommend, we shall be close upon the celestial confines—perhaps within heaven's limits." \* \*

There the sainted author laid down his pen, leaving the article unfinished, and went, none can doubt, to enjoy the blest reality of the scenes he had been so vividly describing.

These articles combine great simplicity, attractiveness, and vivacity of thought and style, with a spiritual unction scarcely to be found in any other writer. Thousands of minds were impressed with them as they first appeared; they reproved the inconsistent Christian, roused the slumbering, and poured a precious balm into many an afflicted bosom. While writing them, the author buried a beloved wife, and had daily more and more sure indications that the hour of his own departure was at hand; and God enabled him, from the depth of his own Christian experience, to open rich fountains of blessing for others.

The *Thoughts on Popery* are like, and yet unlike, the other series. There is the same sprightliness of the imagination, the same clearness, originality, and richness of thought, with a keenness of argument, and sometimes irony, that exposes the baseness and shamelessness of the dogmas and superstitions of Popery, and that must carry home conviction to the under-

standing and heart of every unprejudiced reader. Piece by piece the delusion, not to say imposition, of that misnamed church are exposed, under the heads of the Sufficiency of the Bible, the Nine Commandments, Mortal and Venial Sins, Infallibility, Idolatry, Relics, the Seven Sacraments, Penance, the Mass, Celibacy of the Clergy, Purgatory, Canonizing Saints, Lafayette not at Rest, The Leopold Reports, Supererogation, Convents, &c. We know of nothing that has yet been issued which so lays open the deformities of Popery to common minds, or is so admirably adapted to save our country from its wiles, and to guard the souls of men from its fatal snares.

**HINTS TO PARENTS ON THE EARLY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.** By Gardiner Spring, D. D., Pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church, New-York. 18mo. with a steel engraving. Price 37½ cts.

From the New-York Weekly Messenger and Young Man's Advocate.

*Dr. Spring's Hints to Parents.*—One of the prettiest little works of this class that we have ever met with, is just published; it is called "*Hints to Parents on the Religious Education of Children.*" By Gardiner Spring, D. D." The author has been long and favorably known to the public as a chaste, powerful, and popular writer. The subject of the present work is one of great moment—one in which every parent has a real interest. And we commend this little volume, not only to pious parents, but to all who desire to bring up their children in such a manner as to make them an honor to themselves and a blessing to their fellow-men.

From the Commercial Advertiser.

*Hints to Parents on the Religious Education of Children.* By Gardiner Spring, D. D.—This beautiful little volume, coming out at this time, will be peculiarly acceptable to the congregation of the able and excellent author, and will have the effect of a legacy of his opinions on a most important subject, now that for a time they are deprived of his personal instructions. It is a work that should be in the hands of every parent throughout our country, who has the temporal and eternal interest of his offspring at heart. The few and leading maxims of the Christian religion are plainly and practically enforced, and the parent's duties are descanted on in a strain of pure and beautiful eloquence, which a father's mind, elevated by religion, only could have dictated. We believe that a general knowledge of this little volume would be attended with consequences beneficial to society, since a practice of its recommendations could scarcely be refused to its solemn and affectionate spirit of entreaty.

**THE MINISTRY WE NEED.** By S. H. Cox, D. D., and others. 37½ cents.

From the Literary and Theological Review.

This neat little volume comprises the inaugural charge and address which were delivered on occasion of inducting the PROFESSOR OF SACRED RHETORIC AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY in the Theological Seminary at Auburn. The friends of Dr. Cox will not be disappointed in his inaugural address. It bears the impress of his talents and piety—his enlarged views and Catholic spirit. To analyze it would convey no adequate idea of its merits. His theme is the

ministry of reconciliation—"the chosen medium by which God conciliates men—the mighty moral engineery that accomplishes his brightest wonders—the authentic diplomacy of the *King of kings* working salvation in the midst of the earth." The manner in which he treats his subject, in relation to the importance of the Christian ministry, and the kind of ministry needed in this age and nation, we need hardly remark, will amply repay the perusal of his brethren, if not be interesting and instructive to the Church at large.

"Error-scenting notoriety" may not altogether like the odor of this little book; and the "*lynx-eyed detectors of heresy*" will not be forward to approve a work in which they are handled with unsparing severity; but by "all the favorers on principle of a pious, sound, educated, scriptural, and accomplished ministry in the Church of God, and throughout the world, as the MINISTRY WE NEED, to whom this little volume is most respectfully inscribed," it will be read, and, we trust, circulated.

### THE LILY OF THE VALLEY. 18mo. Price 37½ cents.

From the Methodist Protestant, Baltimore.

This is a neat and very interesting little volume. The narrative throughout will be read with pleasure, and some portions of it with thrilling interest. The story is natural, and told in very neat language and with admirable simplicity. It is not only calculated to please and interest the mind of the reader, but also to make moral and religious impressions upon the heart. We are well assured, if its merits were generally known, that it would find its way into many families and Sabbath school libraries, as it is particularly adapted to please and engage the attention of Juvenile readers.

From the Christian Intelligencer.

This is a republication of a small narrative volume published in England. The narrative is written with beautiful simplicity, possesses a touching interest, and is calculated to leave a salutary impression. It is well fitted for a present by parents or friends to children, and is worthy of a place in Sabbath school libraries.

From the Ladies' Morning Star of Aug. 26, 1836.

The above is the title of a very interesting little work of 123 pages, recently published and for sale by John S. Taylor, Brick Church Chapel, New-York. It is a simple though beautiful narrative of a young female, some portions of which are of the most pathetic and affecting character, particularly designed for the edification and instruction of young females, and a most excellent work to introduce into Sabbath schools. Its tendency is to kindle the flames of piety in the youthful bosom, to instruct the understanding, and to warm and improve the heart. Its intrinsic though unostentatious merits, should furnish it with a welcome into every family.

Commendatory Notice, by the Rev. W. Patton.

Mr. J. S. TAYLOR,—It affords me pleasure to learn that you are about to republish the little work called "The Lily of the Valley." Since the time it was presented to my daughter by the Rev. Dr. Matheson, of England, it has been a great favorite in my family. It has been read with intense interest by many, who have from time to time obtained the loan of it. Indeed it has but seldom been at home since its first perusal. I doubt not but all who have read it will be glad of the opportunity of possessing a copy.

The story is not only natural, but instructive ; and well calculated to impress upon the mind important moral and religious lessons. Some portions of the narrative are of the most touching and thrilling character. There is a charming simplicity pervading the work. I feel a strong confidence that you will find an ample sale for the book. It will find its way into many families, and be found in the libraries of the Sabbath school.

Yours respectfully,

WM. PATTON.

**LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE. By William C. Brownlee, D. D. \$1 00.**

From the Religious Magazine.

*Lights and Shadows of Christian Life. Designed for the Instruction of the Young. By William Craig Brownlee, D. D. of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church, New-York. New-York, John S. Taylor. 1837. 12mo. pp. 388.*—Dr. Brownlee has here presented the Christian public with a volume of Religious Tales, which cannot fail, we think, to be read with general interest by the friends of religion, to whatever creed they may belong. It is refreshing to find one who has been so long harnessed for polemical warfare, thus laying aside his spear and shield, and endeavouring to benefit his readers, by presenting the truths of religion under so attractive a form as is afforded by well-written tales. This is, without doubt, a difficult species of composition, and one in which, though many have made the attempt, few have ever met with more than partial and short-lived success. For this fact there are plainly some obvious reasons. The first is probably the want of a correct public taste for what is just and true in religion. The second, we imagine, lies rather in the mode in which the attempt has usually been made, than in the nature of the case. It is much easier, and consequently far more common, to connect dull and tedious conversations on religious topics, with a meagre and uninteresting narrative, than to form a story which shall by its very texture, impress religious truth, without the aid of direct instruction. Hence, such works, considered as religious essays, are too barren of instruction, to engage much attention, and, viewed as tales, they want the essential element of deep and permanent interest in the narrative.

The views of our author upon this subject may be learned from the following extract from his introductory address to his youthful readers.

Whether the honour, thus "accepted" by Dr. Brownlee, of being associated, in any sense, with Professor Wilson, the incomparable author of the "Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life," will be finally awarded to him, it would be premature for us to attempt to decide by anticipating the verdict of futurity. To be thus associated is indeed a high honour, and one which undoubtedly requires far more for its attainment, than to compose a book with a title similar to that of the highly popular work of the Professor. A\*\*.

From the Methodist Protestant.

*Lights and Shadows of a Christian Life ; designed for the instruction of the young, by Wm. C. Brownlee, D. D.*—This is a most excellent and valuable work. It comprises several highly interesting narratives intended for the illustration of divine truth, and the enforcement of duty. They are founded on fact, and presented in an attractive and nervous style, and well calculated to engage the attention of juvenile readers, for whom the book is

principally designed; and to make deep impressions upon the mind in favor of the Christian religion. There was a great necessity for a volume, whose attractions might divert the mind from those light and trashy productions that are teeming from the press, and calculated to vitiate the taste, and enfeeble the intellect of the reader. This necessity is now met by the interesting and useful volume of Dr. Brownlee; which we hope will have an extensive circulation.

The book is got up in excellent style by the publisher, Mr. J. S. Taylor, of New-York. It may be had in this city of J. J. Harrod.

From the Philadelphia Observer.

*Lights and Shadows of Christian Life*, by William C. Brownlee, D. D. Published by J. S. Taylor, New-York, and Henry Perkins, Philadelphia. The author of this work is well known to, and appreciated by, the American public, as an able controversialist. He exhibits himself in the present publication, as no less able in presenting the details of ordinary life, and in giving them an interesting form, and a practical direction. Instruction, and entertainment, are judiciously blended in this volume, so as to make it attractive to the young, for whose benefit it is principally designed. Lovers of the romance of fiction, will find here the romance of real life in the details of historic facts, as they have occurred in the Christian's career; the contemplation of which, instead of dissipating the mind, and filling the memory with nonsense, will contribute to concentrate the view on the folly of scepticism, the lofty principles, and the rich consolations of the religion of the gospel.

From the Religious Telegraph.

*Lights and Shadows of Christian Life*. By Wm. C. Brownlee, New-York. Published by John S. Taylor, 12mo. pp. 388.

This is an interesting volume, replete with instruction for the young on the most important subjects. It contains a series of short and touching narratives, eight in number, drawn from real life, presenting a view of the joys and sorrows, the lights and shadows of Christian life. The first in the series is a portrait of "the General, or the utter imbecility of modern infidelity;" the second, "the Duel Prevented." The others, which portray the blessed influences and triumphs of grace, are, "the General's Widow;" "the Afflicted Mother;" "the Elder's Son, or the Spoiled Child;" "Incidents in the Life and Ministry of the venerable Moncrieff of Kilfargie;" the First and Last Communion; and "Hans Van Benschooten." These narratives, which contain instruction for readers of every class, are peculiarly appropriate to the young. Were we to estimate them merely as *narratives* on the scale of merit, as well written sketches, we should give them a decided preference to the numerous works of fiction, which are read for recreation, or to indulge a passion for thrilling adventure. The volume is beautifully printed, and put up in a style which will commend it to the good taste of the reader.

From the Troy Whig.

*Lights and Shadows of Christian Life*, by Wm. C. Brownlee, D. D., from the Press of John S. Taylor, Publisher, and Theological and Sunday School Bookseller, New-York. This volume contains a number of interesting sketches and narratives, drawn, as the author states, from real life. It is intended chiefly for the young, and will be read with pleasure by those who are fond of the serious dressed up in something of the style of an ordi-

nary tale or novel. The author, Dr. Brownlee, is known as a man of talents, and a prominent preacher in the city of New-York. For sale in this city by Robert Wason, River-street.

From the Norwich Courier.

*Lights and Shadows of Christian Life. Designed for the instruction of the Young.* By Wm. C. Brownlee, D. D. New-York, John S. Taylor—12mo. pp. 388. Norwich, sold by Samuel C. Starr.—Some of these sketches have appeared before in print, and met the approbation of the public, and are now collected together, revised and enlarged, with the hope of doing more extensive good by giving them a wider circulation. The author says, "I profess to write for young people. In the place of those light and immoral works which the Press inflicts on good taste, and religion and morals, I am anxious to attempt the substitution of something which may, perhaps, captivate the attention of the young; and by God's grace minister some lessons of instruction to the tender mind." This object appears to be happily accomplished. The tales, eight in number, are interesting in their incidents, well narrated and clothed in an ornate and captivating style: and being, as we believe, all founded on fact, they become the more instructive, as depicting circumstances in which others may be called to act. The book is worthy of the attention of parents and others.

**CHRISTIAN RETIREMENT.** From the eighth London Edition. \$1 25.

From the Religious Telegraph.

*Christian Retirement, or Spiritual Exercises of the Heart.* By the Author of *Christian Experience*, as displayed in the *Life and Writings of St. Paul.* From the eighth London Edition; New-York, Published by John S. Taylor, 12mo. pp. 476.—This volume contains thoughts and reflections on a great variety of subjects, connected with the intellectual and spiritual growth of the Christian, in pieces of four or five pages in length. "The Two Pillars," an article copied from it in our columns last Friday, is a fair specimen of the theology and style of the work. In sentiment and spirit it is excellent; its design appears to be such as all good men must approve; and the fact that it has passed through eight editions in London is a strong testimonial, recommending it to the Christian public. Judging the work from a partial reading, we cheerfully concur in such a commendation of it. It is a book for the Christian family and closet. The author would promote the habit of self-examination and prayer, and lead the reader into a closer communion with his own heart and with God. And he endeavours to promote this end, not by the charm and power of novelties—but by giving "line upon line" from the treasures of old theology—such as guided prophets and apostles and martyrs to their heavenly inheritance.

From the Norwich Courier.

*Christian Retirement; or Spiritual Exercises of the Heart—from the eighth London edition.* New-York, John S. Taylor, 12mo. pp. 476. This is one of those admirable volumes, which, disdaining to enter into sectarian controversy, aims to make us better christians by making us better acquainted with the Bible and our own hearts. The object of the writer is thus briefly noticed in the Preface: "The simple design in publishing the following re-

lections is to induce a habit of self-examination and prayer; and to excite to a more diligent perusal of the Word of God." This design is steadily and faithfully kept in view, and the fact that the volume has passed through eight editions in England is no mean testimony of its merits. If read with the right disposition of mind, it cannot be perused without some profit. It can be procured at Mr. Starr's Book-store.

From the Methodist Protestant.

*Christian Retirement; or Spiritual Exercises of the Heart.* This volume consists of meditations and reflections upon evangelical subjects, and is a valuable companion for the Christian in his devotional retirement; as it is calculated to exalt the mind—elevate the feelings,—excite to self-examination,—engage the soul in devout and holy thought, and increase a sense of the value and importance of divine truth. The perusal of such a volume in the closet is highly advantageous, as it calls off the attention from the cares and tumults of life, and concentrates the thoughts upon God and heavenly things. This book, we think, is admirably adapted for this purpose, on account of the practical nature of the subjects; the experimental manner in which they are presented, and the deep-toned piety which breathes in every page.

**THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS**—By James Harrington Evans, A. M.—John S. Taylor, New-York.

From the Brooklyn Advocate.

The Spirit of Holiness is the spirit and essence of genuine and operating piety. The Christian Pilgrim, if he would be true to the great calling of grace, needs ever to pray for and cultivate in his heart, that spirit of holiness which was so conspicuous in the Divine Master, and forms the great feature of resemblance between God and those whom He has sanctified; and it is to be regretted that in the world, and even among professing Christians, this spirit is so seldom witnessed. Men who belong to the communion of Christ, are often guilty of practices which although not strictly immoral, savor but little of holiness. There are ten thousand acts of unchristianlike conduct, of which no code of laws can take cognizance, but which are adverse to all the sacred feelings of the soul, and directly opposed to the spirit of holiness. Against these the author has taken up his pen; and after adverting to the creation, nature, and operation of the spirit of holiness, he dwells forcibly and aptly upon the manifold circumstances and passions which war against its existence. Mr. Evans, the author, is evidently a man of talent and good sense, and treats his subject in a proper and skilful manner. This being the first American edition, it has prefixed to it an introductory preface by the Rev. Mr. Winslow, of the second Baptist Church of this city. The book is printed in the excellent style, usually observable in Mr. Taylor's publications.

**THOUGHTS ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND EARLY PIETY.** By Rev. Wm. S. Plumer. 31 cents.

From the Morning Star.

*Thoughts on Religious Education and Early Piety*, by Rev. William S. Plumer, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Richmond; New.

York, John S. Taylor, Publisher, Brick Church Chapel, corner of Park Row and Nassau-street, opposite the City Hall.

This is the title of a small, though neat and highly interesting work of 113 pages, recently given to the public. It is a work on a most important subject, written in a clear, chaste and classical style, abounding with beauties of an elevated order, with arguments of no ordinary force, and with instruction and counsel, that render it a compendium of wisdom of opinion, associated with purity of thought and sentiment, evidently proceeding from and calculated to inculcate piety of principle and holiness of heart and life. It is one of the best and ablest advisory assistants, in the important duty of rightly and religiously educating children, that has ever been presented before our eyes. All of it is interesting, much pathetically and sublimely eloquent. Its sterling merits entitle it to a general perusal, and the precepts and examples it presents, claim for it universal acceptance and adoption, in educating the rising generation.

From the Christian Intelligencer.

*Thoughts on Religious Education and Early Piety*, by Rev. William S. Plumer, Pastor of the first Presbyterian Church, Richmond, Virginia. New-York, John S. Taylor, 113 pp. 18mo. This neat little volume is on a subject of the first importance, and although it has frequently been treated, yet it well demands "line upon line, and precept upon precept." The name of the author will attract attention to it. The striking and pungent manner which characterizes him, and his aptness at illustration will be found in the little work. It is divided into eight sections or chapters, and will prove instructive and interesting both to parents and children. It may be ranked among the little volumes which deserve to be found in the family, and to be put into the hands of children either as presents, or from the Sunday School Library.

From the Methodist Protestant.

*Thoughts on Religious Education and Early Piety*, by Rev. W. S. Plumer. The object of this little volume is one of the greatest importance; and those who take a proper view of it, will be glad to receive any judicious suggestions upon the religious education of children. Many will be found in this little production, that are very important to be observed, in improving the mind, and forming the character of the young; so as to bring them in early life, under the dominion of the religion of the Bible. The whole subject is discussed, and presented to the mind, in these "Thoughts," in a very judicious and impressive manner, as might be expected from the character of the author, who is extensively known as an able, and zealous minister of Christ.

From the American Traveller.

*Plumer's Thoughts*.—A very excellent little treatise is that of the Rev. Mr. Plumer, on Religious Education, published in a handsome manner by Mr. J. S. Taylor, New-York. It discusses in plain and convincing language, the importance of early instilling into the minds of the generation that is to succeed us, the first principles of that substantial knowledge which will enable them to direct wisely the chariot of church and state. The chapters are brief and the pages unencumbered with irrelevant matter; the youth or the parent cannot misunderstand the design of the author, and he must be an indifferent reader indeed who would not derive information and encouragement from its perusal.

From the Religious Telegraph.

*Thoughts on Religious Education and Early Piety*, by Rev. William S. Plumer, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Va. New-York, Published by John S. Taylor, 18mo. p. 113.

Since mentioning this volume two weeks since, we have had the opportunity of examining it. It contains many excellent thoughts on a subject, which, though often discussed, is not generally appreciated. The reader will find in it valuable suggestions on the following topics: Importance of the subject of Education; Education, what it is; Religious Education; Rules for it; Early Piety possible; Motives to Fidelity in Religious Instruction, and Cases of Early Piety. We would commend the work to all parents as an assistant in the most important work (next to their own salvation) which God has assigned them.

From the Essex North Register.

*Thoughts on Religious Education and Early Piety*, by Rev. William S. Plumer. N. Y. John S. Taylor, 1836.

The above is the title of a little work very happily written, and destined to do much good, we think, to those who are the Educators of the young. In these days, when there is so much need of family influence to counteract the wildnesses of the times, this book appears very opportunely, and we hope will be read by all young parents. It contains the minute detail upon family discipline and religious instruction, which in the course of their experience, they often find themselves in want of.

From the Baptist Record.

*Thoughts on Religious Education and Early Piety*, by Rev. William S. Plumer, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Va. New-York: John S. Taylor, Theological and Sunday School Bookseller, Brick Church Chapel, corner of Park Row and Nassau-street. 18mo. pp. 113.

This excellent little work contains eight sections on the following topics: Importance of the subject of Education; What it is; Religious Education; Early Piety possible; Motives to Fidelity in Religious Instruction; Cases of Early Piety; Conclusion.

This work is written in a spirited manner. It contains many excellent rules for the moral and religious training of children, and these principles of religious education are aptly illustrated by several striking instances of early piety. On these accounts, the work will be useful and interesting to parents and children. We wish it an introduction to families and Sabbath Schools.

**AN EARNEST APPEAL TO CHRISTIANS, ON THE DUTY OF MAKING EFFORTS AND SACRIFICES FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD.** By Wm. C. Brownlee, D. D. 31 cents.

From the American Baptist.

*An Earnest Appeal to Christians on the Duty of Making Efforts and Sacrifices for the Conversion of the World.* By W. C. Brownlee, D. D., of the Middle and North Dutch Churches, N. Y. New-York: John S. Taylor, Brick Church Chapel, corner of Park Row and Nassau-street. 18mo. pp. 157.

This work is in three parts. The first presents a view of the work to be

## ADVERTISEMENTS.

accomplished, viz : *The Conversion of the World*, as predestined, predicted, and certain to be effected by the influence of the Holy Spirit. The *second* treats of the *means* by which this work is to be accomplished, in twelve chapters, in which are considered—the *spirit* which should influence us, prayerful, zealous, and active ; *facts* relating to the condition of the heathen, the worth of their souls, instances of missionary success, facilities afforded by Sunday schools, Bible classes, infant schools, &c. ; *female influence*, and the contrast of the condition of woman in Christian and heathen countries ; the *Bible*, the grand Instrument, with tracts in foreign tongues ; the spirit and manner of *Moravian missionaries* to be copied ; *evangelical revivals* to be cherished, and religious young men educated ; need of *wisdom*, as well as zeal and funds ; popular ignorance and a perverted public opinion must be cured by the labors of discreet agents ; *difficulties* in the way, from rich men and poor men, and sometimes in the church ; the *command* of God to publish the gospel to all men universally obligatory, we must send or be sent ; and property is entrusted to us for this purpose, and not to lavish on ourselves or children ; the necessary *sacrifices* are not really *great* ; all might be saved from intemperance and other needless expenses ; the *expansive power* of benevolence will open new and rich resources, and there is a dire curse on the possession of wealth unsanctified by benevolence ; the importance of *immediate action*, and the loss and folly of postponing charitable efforts.

The *third* part urges the *motives* which influence all to enter on this great and good work, drawn from the deplorable condition of pagans, from the compassion of Christ, and the retributions of eternity.

Such is an analysis of this work. It is written in the author's manner, rather pungent and impressive than accurate and elaborate. And though dedicated to the Reformed Dutch Church, and intended to awaken a missionary spirit among a people who have but recently engaged spiritedly in the good work of foreign missions, its general circulation would diffuse some valuable information among many, and awaken zeal in all the friends of this evangelical enterprise.

From the Morning Star.

*An Earnest Appeal to Christians, on the duty of making Efforts and Sacrifices for the Conversion of the World*, by W. C. Brownlee, D. D., of the Middle and North Dutch Churches, N. Y., published by John S. Taylor, Brick Church Chapel, corner of Park Row and Nassau street, New-York.

This is the title of an interesting little work of 157 pages addressed to Christians of all denominations, urging them to unite their prayers, their exertions, and their wealth for the dissemination of the truths of the Gospel, by means of teaching and preaching, and the circulation of the Sacred Scriptures throughout the whole world, for its conversion. The writer enters on his task with his accustomed zeal and ability, exhibits in a comprehensive view the magnitude and immense importance of the undertaking, states and proves that it is to and will be accomplished, and through the instrumentality of means ; shows the duty of Christians, in this matter, and presents them with the most powerful motives for undertaking, carrying on and consummating the work. This volume will be read with interest by all who sincerely desire the spread of the gospel, and the conversion of the world, now "lying in wickedness," to the religion of the "Prince of Peace," and the glorious hope of a happy immortality.

**THOUGHTS ON EVANGELIZING THE WORLD.** By  
Rev. S. H. Skinner, D. D. 37 cents.

From the Weekly Messenger.

*Thoughts on Evangelizing the World*, by Thomas H. Skinner, pp. 98, published by John S. Taylor, Park Row. The great subject of this discourse, is one which should occupy the attention of every Christian. The scriptures speak with confidence on the universal spread of the Gospel, and, from a consideration of its various promises and predictions, we are led to expect the overthrow of the Satanic empire, in the complete subjugation of the world to the authority of Christ. Success in this respect depends greatly upon the character and conduct of professing Christians; spiritual prosperity among the people of God;—faithfulness in the performance of every duty, is almost necessarily attended by an outpouring of the Spirit of God, and the conversion of sinners: but in the absence of this, when the professors of religion are cold and indifferent, we seldom hear of reformations among ungodly men. It is quite evident that God will bless the world through the church; the light of truth will shine through her, and chase away the gloom and darkness of benighted humanity. The Psalmist says, "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." So it has been and so it will be. The text chosen by Dr. Skinner, at the opening of the Mercer street Presbyterian Church, is exactly to the same point; the church must be enlightened and revived in order to the diffusion of saving knowledge. "God be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us: Selah! That thy way may be known upon earth; thy saving health among all nations." The sublime sentiments, so beautifully expressed in this admirable discourse, should be in the hands of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ. The chief point insisted on is Christian unity, and who does not know that without it little good can be done? The world will not believe in the divine mission and saving character of Christ, unless Christians, professedly so, are one in Christ, and one among themselves. Sectarian notions and movements are an insuperable barrier to the spread of truth. This is shown most clearly in the discourse before us, and our author aims at their overthrow in the following plan of the discourse, which is well sustained and carried out.

"Taking, then, for granted that to evangelize the world is the great object of pursuit to all Christians, I advance and shall endeavour to maintain the following, as PRINCIPLES by which their efforts in prosecuting this object should be regulated—namely:

That they should seek to propagate substantial Christianity, rather than any sectarian form of it.

That they should lay their plans of evangelism, so as to admit the coalition of all Christians.

That they should so conduct their proceedings as to evade as far as possible opposition from the world:

That nevertheless the utmost zeal and resolution are indispensable to carrying the work forward; But, after all,

That they should depend for success, not on their own exertions, however unexceptionable; but on the co-operation of the Divine Power."

We advise Christians of every denomination to purchase, and in the spirit of prayer, read, this most excellent discourse. We think it is adapted to maintain unity and peace among all sincere lovers of practical Christianity.

# ADVERTISEMENTS.

The book is fully printed on good paper, and the binding is superb. In the cover, is impressed in splendid gold letters, the all-comprehending "THY KINGDOM COME."

**POPEERY, THE ENEMY TO LIBERTY.** By Wm. C. Brownlee, D. D. 31 cents.

**PLEASURE AND PROFIT, Vol. 1, or THE MUSEUM.** By Uncle Arthur. 37½ cents.

**PLEASURE AND PROFIT, Vol. 2, or THE BOY'S FRIEND.** By Uncle Arthur. 37½ cents.

**PLEASURE AND PROFIT, Vol. 3, or MARY AND FLORENCE.** By Uncle Arthur. 37½ cents.

**MISSIONARY REMAINS, or SKETCHES OF EVARTS, CORNELIUS, AND WISNER.** By Gardiner Spring, D. D., and others. 37½ cents.

**THE CHRISTIAN'S POCKET COMPANION.** Selected from the works of JOHN ROGERS, DR. OWEN, DAVID BRAINERD, PRESIDENT EDWARDS, and others, with an Introduction by REV. JOHN BLATCHFORD, of Bridgeport, Conn. 25 cents.

From the New-York Observer.

*Christian's Pocket Companion.* This very small but neat manual, just published, is a compilation of some of the purest sentiments and holiest aspirations of such men as Owen, Rogers, Brainerd, and President Edwards. We venture to say that no Christian can make it the familiar companion of his heart, as well as "pocket," without becoming evidently a holier and a happier man.

**THE CAUSE AND CURE OF INFIDELITY.** By the Rev. David Nelson, of Quincy, Illinois; late of Marion County, Missouri. New-York. John S. Taylor, 1837.

From the Journal of Commerce.

A book with the above title page, has just been published by Mr. John S. Taylor. When it was announced as being in the press, the thought was suggested, whether there was not already an abundance of treatises on the subject of infidelity; and whether the feebleness of argument, which characterize some, and the cold, abstruse speculation which chills and mystifies others, were not adapted rather to beget scepticism than to remove it. But a perusal of this book has convinced us, that at least one treatise was wanting, which in simplicity, cogency, directness, and clear illustration, should be answerable to the practice and business-like habits of the present generation. Dr. Nelson's work has all these characteristics, and is therefore pre-eminently suited to make a deep impression upon the community.

Our author was once himself a sceptic, thoroughly versed in all sceptical writings, from the impious witticisms of Voltaire, down to the miserable slang of Tom Paine. His acquaintance with men, in all parts of our country, is uncommonly extensive; and he has met practical infidelity as a *friend* and a *foe*, in almost every variety of form. He comes before the public, therefore, as a physician intimately acquainted with the disease which he professes to cure. None can read the book and not feel that the writer is perfectly master of his subject. For strength of argument, point, simplicity, and felicitous illustration, drawn from a storehouse of facts, the book is equal to any we ever read. It is a *common sense* book, which we hope will find its way into every family in our land. Sincerely do we hope it will be read by all who are infected with the disease of infidelity, and work, with the blessing of God, a speedy cure. The external execution of the book is good, it being printed on excellent paper and handsomely bound.

From the Commercial Advertiser.

*The Cause and Cure of Infidelity, with an account of the author's conversion.* By the Rev. David Nelson. New-York. John S. Taylor, 1837.

This is no common-place, or ordinary book: but is an original, experimental and practical work, adapted to the existing aspects of scepticism in our country, and cannot fail to be useful to all who read it. The author, now an aged and venerable minister of the gospel, was long an infidel, a disciple of rationalism, a confirmed sceptic. He writes, therefore, from experience of infidelity, its causes and its cure; and as the spirit and style of the volume are mild and conciliatory, while at the same time he deplores error and vindicates truth with sufficient point and force, we see not how sceptics, who are honest, can excuse themselves from reading this book of reasons for renouncing scepticism and vain philosophy, by one who now labors to build up that which he once sought to destroy. We commend this book of reasons for believing in the Bible, written by an Infidel, to all "free inquirers" who are honest, and such will, at least, be convinced that the author is sincere; and more, that the extraordinary revolution of his opinions, which he here records, was yielded with a sufficiency of resistance, and not until every weapon of rationalism had been wielded and vanquished by the majesty of truth. The distribution of this volume among sceptics of every class, would do more to convert them from the error of their ways than can be hoped for from public or private disputations, or even from those strictly controversial works which are ever issuing from the press. The author and publisher have performed a real service to the community by this timely publication.

**SERMONS.** By Rev. Charles G. Finney. With a Portrait.  
\$1 00.

The sermons are twelve in number, on the following subjects:

1. Sinners bound to change their own hearts.
2. How to change your heart.
3. Traditions of the elders.
- 4, 5. Total depravity.
6. Why sinners hate God.
7. God cannot please sinners.
8. Christian Affinity.
9. Stewardship.

## ADVERTISEMENTS.

Doctrine of Election.  
Reprobation.  
Love of the World.

It will be seen, from a glance at the subjects, that this volume contains Mr. Finney's mode of elucidating several highly important points of doctrine and duty, and will be read with interest and profit every where. pp. 277. 8vo. Price \$1.

From the Morning Star.

*Sermons on Important Subjects*, by Rev. C. G. Finney. Third edition, pp. 277, large octavo.

This volume comprises twelve sermons, on highly important practical subjects, which ought to address themselves to the serious consideration of every man, woman, and child of Adam. These sermons were, we believe, principally delivered in the Chatham-street Chapel, and set forth, in a clear, forcible and convincing manner, the reverend author's views of the Gospel-truths of which he treats. The style is plain and sententious, though wrought with much originality, and characterized by the boldness, energy, and persuasiveness of its author.

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